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M. H.

B. Hensbury,
1842.

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MEMORIAL HALL, LONDON.

~~66. Ab. 29~~

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The WISE
Gospel-Preacher

HIS

Praise and Practice,

Duty and Dignity,

Opened in a

SERMON

On ECCLES. 12. 9.

Charles Mifflin Davis 1828
See the end of the Epistle &c.

By *Sr* Mr Minister of the Gospel,

one of the early independent, and

pastor at Deadman's place. Milson.

Isa. 52. 7. How beautiful upon the Mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tydings, that publisheth peace, &c.

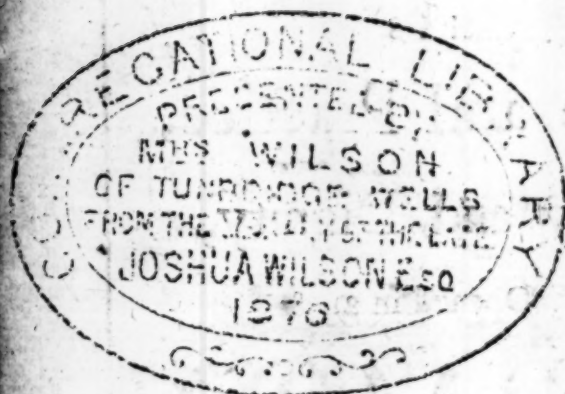
Printed for the Author.

Post Am. 1645.

Post Am. 1653.

Steph
More
a Beto
Capit
See p. 10
v 219.

See p.
721





To that Congregation^r over ^{p. 253}
whom the Lord hath made ^{209.}
me an Overseer^r; Increase ^{p. 211,}
of Grace here, and Glory ^{v. 112,}
hereafter. ^{213, 214.}



Brethren and Beloved in our Lord Jesus, these Sermons as they were preached amongst you, even so was their Publication earnestly solicited by some of you, at whose request I have yeelded to that I designed not in their Preaching, nor intended to have done long since that task was finished: But remembring I am not only a Debtor to *Jew* and *Gentile*, but more especially to you also, not onely by one means, but by every means, to endeavour your furtherance in the Faith, I judged my self obliged to help you with that Printed, which the Lord gave you in Preaching: And I may safely say, so near as I could, your Eys now have only what once

The Epistle Dedicatory.

your Ears heard. As to you my Beloved, whose importunity prevailed upon me to undertake this Work, know two Arguments prevailed upon me to Answer your Request; The one, My Love towards you; the other, My desire of your Spiritual and Eternal Welfare; and if my Labour of Love for your sakes may providentially extend or reach to the advantage of any others that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, I therein shall and will rejoyce. I need not here give you any account of the Nature of this Treatise, you well know, it is to open both the Wise-Preachers and the Wise-Hearers Work and Business; you know I need the one, and I also judge you want not need sufficient to learn the other: As to the Method, it is and ought to be plain, as best becoming Gospel-Mysteries; 'twas Truth, not Humane Wisdom or Eloquence that I designed to manifest; and surely should I thus have acted, I should have pull'd down with one hand what I was setting up with the other, and so should have been found a transgressor; As to my often hinting of any thing minded in this Discourse, know the nearness of the Phrases in the Text one to another constrained it, except I should have broke the bounds,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

bounds, and dealt partially with the Text; and my thoughts are, that Plenty may even conduce to Profit: And as for those Phrases, Titles, and Denominations of Persons, which in this Discourse may seem unto any tender ear to be plain, harsh, or reproachful to any, know this, I have warily considered to fasten them only on persons really deserving such names; and although I have herein followed the footsteps of the Saints & Penmen of the Scripture, yet have I abated, rather than exceeded their practice; as is most evident, if you consider of some expressions wherein how great or learned or seemingly pious soever some sinners were, yet both Christ himself, and the Prophets and Apostles, have spoken very home and hard against such Persons, styling them *Hypocrites, Devils Children, Wolves, Dogs, Lyons, Foxes, Vipers, painted-Sepulchres, whited Walls, Princes of Sodom, Rulers of Gomorrah, Adulterers, Adulteresses*, and such like, as the Scripture witnesseth; wherefore marvel not at my freedom of expression to sinners of the same dye. And lastly, My resolution was to avoid the reproof due to such as give flattering Titles unto men; and as *Elihu* saith, *Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person; neither*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

let me give flattering titles unto men; for I know not to give flattering titles; for in so doing my Maker would soon take me away, Job 32.21,22. And further, If any suppose I have in this Discourse affected and discovered a Spirit of singularity, and diversity of Opinion from the most of even pious, judicious, and sober men of this Age. I Answer in uprightness, 'twas not affectedly but constrainedly done, and I suppose even such Objectors will not deny, 'tis better differing from men, how wise soever, than from Christ; and since all men know but in part, and Prophecie but in part, that may be Christ's Truth which is not acknowledged or understood by many; is it not written, *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause, to decline after many, to wrest judgment,* Exod.23.2. and as Paul saith, *I believed, therefore have I spoken,* 2 Cor. 4. 13. I shall willingly receive better information, and then speedily change my present apprehension. Lastly, If any Object against the largeness of this Tract; my Answer is, 'Twas my desire to have prevented it, could I with fidelity and prudence have effected it; and the truth is, I have denied my self, and slipt over some
Parti-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Particulars, which might more largely have been insisted on, that this Exception might have been spared : And now my dearly Beloved, whose importunity begat me this labour, Let me now crave leave, before I conclude this Epistle, to request a few things of you. *First*, My Brethren, if you meet with any Advantage, Content, or Comfort, by perusing these Lines, pray give all the praise and glory to God, whose hand alone hath wrought it, and whose Spirit hath revealed it ; and think often upon *1 Chron. 29. 10, to 16.* *Secondly*, Pray be not only knowers of these Truths, but doers of the same. Oh, be not only so principled, but so practising ; also let the height of Holiness in this Discourse discovered, be your main business to attain, so shall I not want a good reward for this my labour. *Thirdly*, Labour to train up and educate your Families in this good knowledge of the Lord, and shew them the good old way, wherein they should walk with God, as *Moses* adviseth, *Deut. 4. 9. 10.* saying, *Only take heed to thy self, and keep thy Soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the dayes of thy life ; but teach them thy Sons, and thy Sons Sons :* Especially the

The Epistle Dedicatory.

day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the dayes that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their Children, with 11, 19. Fourthly, Wonder not, neither be stumbled, if you find these Truths evil spoken of, scorned, traduced; but remember, this was to be expected in such a day as this. And, lastly, Forget not him that you have prevailed upon, but in all your supplications remember me, and pray for me, both night and day, that I may be faithful to the Death, that I may be filled with the Spirit, that I may be abundant in the Work of the Lord, and that my Labours may be acceptable and succesful among the Saints, that so I may finish my course with joy, and not with grief, according to the Will of God. And thus with my Prayers for you also, I commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all them which are Sanctified.

Your Servant for Christ,

STEPHEN MORE.

TO THE
READER.

Christian Reader,



Although there is nothing new or strange now to be presented to thy view ; for, as Solomon saith, The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be ; and that which is done, is that which shall be done ; and there is no new thing under the Sun : Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new ? It hath been already of old time, which was before us, Eccles. 1. 9, 10. Wherefore let me intreat thee peruse this Book for Truth, and not for Novelty, lest so doing, thou lose thy labour, and reap no profit by thy pains : And if any shall meet thee with their Out-cry, crying, Take heed, for here are strange things presented to your eyes ; say No, for there is nothing new or strange under the Sun : And if any thing here written be to any strange, I must take leave to tell them, 'Tis because they know not the Scripture, and are strangers in Jerusalem, and have not known the things that are come to pass there in these dayes, Luke 24. 18. And if any should yet retort upon me as a troubler of Israel, or a bringer forth of strange

To the Reader.

strange Things, or new Doctrines, to their ears, I will not think it strange to be thus dealt with, for thus dealt their Fathers with the Prophets and Apostles, in that first Book of Kings we find that thus Ahab said to Elijah, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? But he answered, I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy Father's House, in that ye have forsaken the Commandments of the Lord, and hast followed Baalim, vers. 17, 18. And thus was holy Paul served, Acts 17. where you read, That certain Philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him; and some said, What will this Babler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange Godds; because he preached unto them, Jesus, and the Resurrection: And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new Doctrine whereof thou speakest is? for thou bringest certain strange things to our ears; we would know therefore what these things mean? vers. 18, 19, 20. Therefore if such things befall me, I shall not be moved; for if thus they dealt with the green Trees, marvel not they thus deal with the dry: Wherefore, Christian Reader, notwithstanding such Outcries as these, which probably thou mayest meet with, yet be pleased to read on, and consider what is said; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things, that thou mayest search the Scriptures, and try whether the things asserted for truth be so or no; for no more is imposed upon your Faith, than what evidence of Scripture doth demonstrate to be the Faith of Jesus, and of his Elect; and if any Fathers in our Israel shall say, To what purpose is this waste? Preachers doubtless know their Duty well enough, it

were

To the Reader.

were well if others knew theirs better. I shall only Answer these over-wise ones in the language of Job, No doubt but ye are the People, and wisdom shall die with you, Chap. 12. 2. Yet bear with me to shew my Love to Christ, and offer my Mistē to you, remembering what Paul saith, And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know, 1 Cor. 8. 2. And if you know these things already, O how happy shall both you and I be, when we shall be found doing the things we say we know, and are here revealed: And as for others, (or our Hearers) know, so far as the Work called for it, they are not forgotten; but remember, that the more fully the Preacher lives up to his Duty, the more the People will be furthered in their Duty, Preachers being not only nominally called Stars and Shepherds, or B. Shops and Fathers, but also they ought virtully to be Lights in their Candlesticks, Shepherds feeding of their Flocks, and Fathers laying up and laying out for their Children, as the Lord teacheth, saying, Ye are the Salt of the Earth; but if the Salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? Ye are the Lights of the World; a City set upon a Hill which cannot be hid: Neither do men light a Candle and put it under a Bushel, but on a Candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the House. Let your Light so shine before men, that they may see your good Works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven, Mat. 5. 13, 14, 15, 16. But if notwithstanding what hath been said by me, my Mothers Children, and Elder Brethren will yet be angry with me; I will resolve not to pass for Man's Day, or to be angry with them, or to return evil for evil, or railing

To the Reader.

railing for reviling, but pray for them, with holy Stephen, and cry, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, Acts 7. 50.

My end and ground, both in Preaching and Printing these Sermons, was an inward motion to follow the movings and workings of the Spirit upon my Soul, in conformity to those I read of in 2 Pet. 1. 21. where it is said, Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: 'Tis truth, as hath been already owned. When these Sermons were Preached, I thought not of Printing; but since being called upon so to do, I judged it my duty, as one of Christ's living Creatures, to walk streight forward whither the Spirit was to go, and not to turn when going, Ezek. 1. 12. As for my great unfitness, yea, exceeding great unfitness for such a work, I profess I am not unsensible of it, neither shall be ashamed to own it to any that shall object it; yet notwithstanding, since God despiseth not the day of small things, and will accept of what a man hath, and not of what a man hath not, wherefore I am resolved to be found faithful, as becomes him that is a Steward, not forgetting what the Lord said to Ezekiel, Son of Man, I have made thee a Watchman unto the House of Israel, therefore hear the Word at my Mouth, and give them warning from me, Chap. 3. 17. The Style is low, and the Method plain, and the Argument somewhat bold and impartial; wonder not at it, it being most like him that did it, even one who was resolved to be one of Paul's Scholars in this Work; to wit, Not to come to you with excellency of Speech, or of Wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know any thing among you, save

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save Jesus Christ, and him crucified, 1 Cor. 2.
1, 2. Surely plainness will hurt or binder none,
though elegancy and obscurity might, although it
could have profited none, who-ever it might have
pleased. If any think due respect hath not suffici-
ently been shown to Superiors, let me say to such,
my aim and utmost endeavour hath been, not to offend
or over-look such, but to give unto Cesar the
things which are Cesar's, though to God the things
that are God's: And this I have done, so far as I
might, without sin or flattery. Wherefore vouch-
safe to peruse, soberly and thoroughly, these lines;
and know here is Milk for Babes, and stronger Meat
for stronger Ones. And let me tell you, God is
now speaking to you, and saying to you as of old,
How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?
and the scorners delight in scorning, and fools hate
knowledge? Turn you at my reproof; behold, I
will pour out my Spirit unto you, and make known
my words unto you, Prov. 1. 22, 23. 'Tis now
your day of Grace, Jesus Christ is wooing all his
People to come out of Babylon; but if ye will not
hear, and fear, and repent your selves, ye must be
sure to partake of her judgment as well as of her
sins, Rev. 18. 4. O! do not think Superstition,
or Idolatry, or Will-worship, or mens invention in
God's Worship a small sin; but remember that dread-
ful word, Do we provoke the Lord? are we stronger
than he? (O no) be not deceived, God is not
mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall
he also reap, 1 Cor. 10. 22. Gal. 6. 10. Where-
fore do nothing partially in the matter of Religion;
be not circumspect about Doctrine, and careless about
Discipline or Church wayes; be not strict for second-
Table-

To the Reader.

Table-Duties, and make no Conscience of first-Table-sins : Neither make it all your holiness to wind Family-Duties, but also look well to your publick-Worship, or your walking with Jesus Christ in his Publick-Worship.

Such things as these, Christian Reader, are in this little Treatise presented to thy view and consideration; be pleased to take nothing in the evil or worse part, but as thou hast all from love, so let thy love accept of all that carries Christ's Image and Superscription upon it; and with thy Mantle of Love, cover all thou meetest with of humane frailty: And if by all, or any thing herein presented to thee, thou receapest any real benefit or profit, I request you to give God all the glory, and say, Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever; which is, and shall be, the earnest prayer of him who is, and will remain thine to serve thee,

S. MORE.

The

The Contents.

Ecclesiastes 12. 9. *Moreover, Because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge: Yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many Proverbs, &c.*

THe words, in general, contain an account of an Accomplished Preacher.

1. *As to his Qualification.*
2. *As to his Work, Aet, and Dispensation.*
3. *The blessing and advantage of enjoying such Preachers.*

But more particularly take notice of these things following :

1. *A Preface in this word [Moreover]:* — *Page 3.*
2. *A Reason of what was done, [Because the Preacher was wise].* — *p. 9.*
3. *The Person spoken of; The Preacher.* — *p. 13.*
4. *That which is related or declared concerning him, and that in these particulars :*
 1. *The Aet; his constancy in Teaching, &c.*
 2. *Perseverance in this Work; He still taught the People Knowledge.* — *p. 81.*
 3. *His wariness or circumspection in managing this great Work: Yea, he gave good heed.* — *p. 121.*

4. *He*

The Contents.

- p. 131. 4. His diligence, industry, or laboriousness, He sought ; he did not catch up, or deliver any thing, but what he had sought out, and found meet to be delivered.
- p. 150. 5. We have his fidelity or perfection in Preaching, he did set in order many Proverbs. He set in, not out of God's, or due order, his Preachings or Proverbs ; amplified in these Words ; The Preacher sought out acceptable words.
- p. 168. But again, In the next place we have the Property or Excellency of that which was Preached or Written ; it was upright, even words of Truth.
- p. 182. 6. Lastly, We have the Use and Benefit of the properties of such Preachings or Preachers ; in these words, The words of the wise are as Goats and Nails.
- p. 194. "Given by one Shepherd."

The



The Wise Gospel-Preacher's Praise and Practice.

ECCLES. 12. 9, 10, 11.

9. *Moreover, because the Preacher was Wise, he still taught the People Knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many Proverbs.*
10. *The Preacher sought to find out acceptable Words, and that which was written was upright, even words of Truth.*
11. *The words of the Wise are as Goats, and as Nails fastned by the Masters of Assemblies, which are given by one Shepherd.*



Solomon the Wise is declared to be the Composer of this Book, and it may probably be the last he wrote, the which I shall not positively determine, nor whether these three Verses be his, because they seem more probable to have been wrote by his Historian, or that hand which committed this Book to the Churches Treasury, rather than by himself, and are part of the con-

B

clusion

2 The Gospel-Preacher's

clusion of this Book. As to the Book it self, I shall say nothing, the words I have pitched upon, having no dependance upon any thing that went before, unless to commend it, and incourage to improve it; because both of the excellency of the Preacher, and of that which was Writ or Preach'd. The words in general contain an account of an Accomplished Preacher.

First, As to his Qualification.

Secondly, As to his Work, Act, or Dispensation.

Thirdly, The Blessing and Advantage of injoying such Preachers. But more particularly take notice of these things in these Verses.

1. A Preface in this word; *Moreover.*
2. A Reason of what was done; *Because the Preacher was Wise.*
3. The Person spoken of; *The Preacher.*
4. That which is related or declared concerning him, and that in these Particulars.

First, The Act; his constancy in teaching, &c.

Secondly, Perseverance in his Work; *He still taught the People Knowledge.* His wariness or circumspection in managing this great Work; *Yea, he gave good heed.*

Thirdly, His Diligence, Industry, or Labouriousness; *He sought out:* he did not catch up, or deliver any thing but what he had sought out, and found meet to be delivered.

Fourthly, We have his Fidelity or Perfection in Preaching; *He did set in order many Proverbs:* He set in, not out of God's, or due order, his preachings or Proverbs, amplified in these words; *The Preacher sought out acceptable words.* But again,

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3

in the next place we have the Property or Excellency of that which was preached or written, it was upright, *Even words of Truth.*

Lastly, We have the Use, and Benefit, or Properties of such Preaching and Preachers in these words; *The words of the Wise are as Goats, and Nails fastened by the Masters of Assemblies, which are given from one Shepherd.*

I shall not trouble you with the opening or clearing of any obscurity in the Text at this time; but refer that till afterwards, where more conveniently I may dispatch it; but shall proceed to some Doctrines, or Conclusions hence observable. The first is taken from the first word; or Preface, *Moreover.* We may take these words not only literally, as spoken of the Typical *Solomon*; but as Prophetical, and pointing at a greater than *Solomon*, our Lord Jesus, *That so spake as never man spake,* John 7. 46. And also we might eye these words as dogmatical, or instructing what every Wise Gospel-Preacher ought to be and do; whence we may collect thus much.

Doct. 1. *That the Lord is not sparing or scant in means of Grace to his Church and People; but hath provided, and doth afford them one, and another means of help, and advantage for Soul-Concernments.*

God, as God, hath in Mercy and Wisdom dealt with the Second Creation and state of Grace, as with the first Creation. In Nature he hath not made single Fruits, Flowers, Plants, Grain, or Beasts, Birds, or Fishes, but innumerable in number, and manifold in kind; even so great Variety and plenty, that even the wisest of Moralists or

4 The Gospel-Preacher's

Naturalists scarce knew what need or end there is even of that variety or plenty, unless to commend the Creator. Men are often times at a loss how to improve; and not despise that plenty: Even so is it in spiritual and supernatural things; Men are so fully provided of them, that they even surfeit and are wanton under God's Divine Ordinances and Provisions of Grace, as once *Israel* did of *Manna*; yet it seems good to God, to have *moreovers*, and to minister himself in manifold wisdom to his People. To instance, thus God dealt with *Israel*; he gave them not onely *Moses*, but *Aaron* also; not onely Sacrifice, but Circumcision also; nor Circumcision only, but the Passover also; nor the Tabernacle, but the Temple also; not onely Priests and Levites, but Prophets and Nazarites likewise: That so God might say as *Isaiab* 5. *What could I have done more for my Vineyard, which I have not done?* And this *Job* tells you, *Chap.* 33. 14, 15. So *Solomon* in the 9th of his *Proverbs*. Even so hath he done under the Gospel, not tying us to any one Way or Means, but affords us various Means and Seasons. We have the Heaven and the Earth declaring his Glory and Handywork, *Psal.* 19. Also we have the Law and Statutes of God in his Scripture, which is able to make the Man of God wise unto Salvation. We have also the Law written in our hearts. We have Instruments without, and Instincts within. We have the Word and Men without, and the Spirit within. We have Mercy and Judgment, all whispering to us, *Fear ye the Lord*. So that we may truly say, God as well as Man hath his *Moreovers*. And we serve not a hard Master, nor is our reproof and destruction

Praise and Practice. 5

destruction less than sufficiently of our selves. Now the Grounds and Reasons why God walks thus towards his People are briefly these.

Reas. 1. That the Glory of the Wisdom, Power, and Bounty of God might the more gloriously appear, by the riches of his Liberality, and plenty of Provisions afforded to his People, *Prov. 16. 4. Rom. 2. 4. Ephes. 1. 18, 19. Col. 1. 27.*

Reas. 2. God makes his Provisions to be very large and plentiful, affording us *moreovers*, to the end that we might with the more ease and facility do his Will, and attain the knowledge and enjoyment of Salvation; so *Isa. 28. 9, 10, 11, 12.* and this the Apostle seems to eye, *Acts 17. 30, 31.* And the Prophet *Micah, Chap. 6. 6, 7, 8.* Christ saith, *His Yoke is easie, and his Burthen Light*; because he affords light sufficient to see it with, and strength enough to do what is required, and helps many to assist us; and rewards full, and rich enough to quicken and encourage us. But again,

Reas. 3. The Lord doth it to comply with our nature and frailty, which is not so well satisfied, nor so effectually furthered or helped by one Way or Means, as by diversity and variety, and therefore vouchsafeth us his *Moreovers*, or Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept.

Reas. 4. And lastly, It is to stop the Mouth and leave silent and inexcusable all neglecters and despisers of Gospel-Grace and Provisions; since God can say to all such, *What need I have done more than what I have done?* This God pleads for himself, *2 Chron. 36. 15, 16.* and *Luke 13. 7, 8, 9.*

The first Use is of Information.

By way of Improvement or Application briefly; let this first admonish us to believe how inexcusable wicked and ungodly Men and Women are, who have God's overpluses and *moreovers*; I mean, that living under the light of the Gospel among the Saints, enjoy such means to better them, and change them; and yet remain ignorant, profane, and ungodly. Will not all this present favour and goodness of God to them, one day rise up in judgment against them, and be an aggravation against them, as *Paul* saith, *Rom. 2. 3, 4, 5, 6.* Oh! let such think seriously and timely upon two Scriptures, and I shall say no more to this Use, *Luk. 19. 41, 42.* *And when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it; saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes;* compared with *Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.* *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come; if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the Earth which drinketh in the Rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth Herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth Thorns and Briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.*

Secondly, Caution.

Secondly, Let it be a word of Caution to all of

us, not to be wanton, and despise, and slight God's *moreovers*, or his overplus kindneses, as I am afraid too many do among Professors at this day; like wanton *Israel*, that despised God's *Manna*, *Numb.* 11. 4, 5, 6. calling it, *light Bread*, *Chap.* 21. 5. Even saying as Christ's Disciples, *What need this waste?* *Matth.* 26. 8. Like unto many now-adayes that say, What need so much Preaching? Yea, What need of such long Preaching? Is not shorter Preaching better Preaching? I beseech you take heed of such thoughts, lest God takes away our plenty, and give us scarcity enough: Oh let me perswade such wanton Christians to take the Counsel *Peter* gives to *Simon Magus*; *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee*, *Acts* 8. 22, 23. Oh Friends! take heed of such thoughts, of such vain, yea, vile thoughts, for surely we are not grown such quick Learners or good Scholars, or so soon taught what the good and perfect Will of the Lord is, as to conclude, we need few Preachers, or little Preaching. Neither is the Preaching of the Gospel such a mean Excellency, as worth little more than to be despised; or hath the Lord Christ given Gifts to men in vain; Oh no; he that hath given Gifts to many, not to one, he well knew many Preachers were necessary, that by here a little, and there a little, by Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept, because the People are so hard to learn, *Isa.* 28. 9. Therefore the Lord hath conferred upon the Church diversify of Gifts, though they proceed from one Spirit: He hath set in his Church not only Teachers, but Prophets also; and dare we despise Prophets for Pro-

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phesyings, and say, What need have we of these Ministrations? Hath the Lord given diversly, as to Degrees or Measures, to one three, to another five Talents, and shall he that hath received the least, be thought unmeet to have the freedom to improve his Measure for his Lords Honour, or his Brethrens Advantage? or, where the Lord bestows a larger Measure, and his Servants are faithful in the Stewardship thereof; dare any say the time is waste, and the Message too long? Not remembering, that although he that can speak but five words understandingly, must be accepted; yet he which can speak ten, must not be muzzled or restrained. Christ, and his Spirit, ought to be free; Wherefore remember that saying of *Paul*, *Let no man blame us in this abundance which is administered by us*, 2 Cor. 8. 20. And to cure this evil, take this short direction, Be more sensible of your want of the means of Grace, and more humble spirited, truly hungry and thirsting after Gospel-Ordinances.

Lastly, Let it be a word of Exhortation, If our Means and Provisions be abundant, and redundant, let not our fruitfulness be short, lest what the Lord Jesus said to *Jerusalem*, he say to us also, *The Kingdom shall be taken from you, and given to a People bringing forth the Fruit thereof, and he let out his Vineyard to other Husbandmen*, *Match*, 21. 34. 41, 43. with *Heb*. 6. 8. How dreadful then will thy state and mine be, to enjoy much means of Grace, and to bring forth none or little Fruit by it: Oh! consider this all you that forget God. So much for the first Particular, or word in the Text, *Moreover*.

Now

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Now let us consider the next Particular, which contains the Reason of what the Preacher said or did, that is in these words, *Because the Preacher was Wise.*

Before I go further, Three things need some clearing or Exposition.

First; How this suits with some other of Scripture-Expressions, for *Solomon* to commend himself, or to say the Preacher was Wise, or Painful, yea, Useful also.

Secondly; What a Preacher is, or what this Preacher was.

Thirdly; What this Wisdom is that is here spoken of.

For the clearing of the *first* thing, Though this Book is *Solomons*, and bears his Name, and was by him Composed; yet is it not clear that this Copy, or these Words, were his own: But as *David* and other Kings had their Scribes and Pen-men which did write for them, and wrote after them; even so might *Solomon*, and doubtless had, as his Story in *1 Kings 4. 3.* compared with *2 Chron. 9. 29.* doth declare. And so though he did not, yet they well might set him forth. But secondly, Although in moral respects, and at some time it is not fit for a man to commend himself, yet in two respects a man may (especially a Preacher) so do, and be innocent in so doing: First, in case of scandal, he may vindicate himself from unjust aspersions and reproach; So *Samuel* did; the people had clouded and eclipsed his worthy and innocent Government, *1 Sam. 8. 4, 5.* therefore, *Chap. 12.* he vindicates himself. So also did *Jeremiah*, *Chap. 15. 10.*

So *Paul*, in *2 Cor. 10. 3, 7.* so in *Chap. 12.* with that

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that of *Job* 29. Secondly, In furtherance of a
man's Work or Imployment, a man may com-
mend himself: So *Paul* did, *2 Cor.* 2. and *able*
Gal. 1. 12, to 19. with *chap.* 2. 6, 7, 8, 9. And
thus *Nehemiah* acted, in *chap.* 5. from *vers.* 14
to the close of the Chapter. And thus I conceive
if *Solomon* did commit this to the Churches Treas-
ury, from his own Hand or Pen, in this latter
sense he might humbly and innocently do it. But
possibly the stick or obscurity may be from the
Translators so rendring the Words; for if the
words be thus read, this difficulty is easily avoided
and the sense preserved intire. Moreover, *A Wise*
Preacher will still give good heed, and so it speaks
Duty, and not Commendation.

Secondly, Let me a little open this Particular,
What a Preacher is, or, *this Preacher was* that here
is spoken of. A Preacher is not onely such as are
under Ministerial Unction, or calling in Office of
Ministry. But a Preacher is any, or every such
Person or Disciple of Christ that hath received
Gifts of the Spirit to profit withal, and is able to
speak a word in due season to him that is weary, for
Edification, Exhortation, and Comfort; and these
in Scripture are called Prophets, or Prophesying
Preachers, as in that of *Gen.* 20. 7. *1 Cor.* 12.
28. And such a Prophetical or Prophesying
Preacher was *Solomon*, the Preacher in my Text,
and not an Official, Ordained, or Ministerial
Preacher, for such were only at that time the Tribe
of *Levi*, the High Priest, Priests, and Prophets
Extraordinary. But the Book tells us, this Preacher
was by Office a King, not a Priest; he was onely
a Prophet, or Membral Preacher, even such a
Preacher

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of Preacher as that Church had many of, and any Brother or Member of that Church, who was able, though not so able, might as freely and as lawfully preach as *Solomon*, as that passage *Acts* 14. 13. 15. compared with *Luke* 4. 16, 17. Ye men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the People, say on: And such Preachers *Moses* and *Paul* allowed, *Numb.* 11. 29. And *Moses* said, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them; compared with *1 Cor.* 14. 29, 31. Let the Prophets speak, and let the other judge, for ye may all prophesie one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. Many other Testimonies may be added, but because I shall speak to this more hereafter, let this at present suffice.

The third thing to be cleared is, *What this Wisdom is*, or what is this Wisdom that *Solomon* saith the Preacher had, and what that Wisdom is that every Preacher ought to have, that will thus wisely or profitably Preach. Wisdom, as *Solomon* phraseth it, doth not onely excel Folly, *Eccles.* 2. 13. but Wisdom also excels Wit. Wit is a quickness or acuteness of the Understanding to catch or apprehend things by. But Wisdom is that depth of Reason and Judgment, whereby Apprehensions, Thoughts, Sciences, Purposes, and Businessses are begun and compleated, or are honourably, profitably, and regularly performed. A Fool may have Wit, only a Wise Man can have Wisdom, or carry on his Design or Business wisely.

But still the Question is, *What Wisdom that is that is here treated of? or is Preaching Wisdom,*
even

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even that Wisdom without which a man cannot be competent or profitable Preacher?

Ans. p. 64. To which Question I Answer first, Negatively. It is neither Moral, Natural, or acquired Wisdom as Languages, Tongues, Arts, or Sciences: This I not only affirm, but shall also confirm; though when all is done, no doubt, but so saying, may make some marvel, and others be mad with me, once the Silver-Smiths were with *Paul*, when they cryed down their *Diana*, by whom they had their Wealth, as have the School-masters, Tutors, Academists, Collegiats, Parsons, Doctors, Prelates, Popes, with all the residue of that crue Antichristian Clergy-men: But I am learning not to fear the faces of men, or respect these Persons, but make known the Truth as it is in Jesus remembring what *Zechariah* saith will be their portion, *even every one to be ashamed of his Vision* Chap. 13. of that Book. But affirmatively,

Answer, The reason why I affirm that this Wisdom before specified is not the Gospel-Wisdom, is First, Because God hath not set this Ax or Hammer apart to do his or this work with.

Secondly, It is but a carnal natural Weapon and is onely fit for carnal, natural, weak, and wordly Work. And for such purposes, this Learning, Wisdom, or Furniture is fit, or very useful; but no more fit for preaching, or a Preacher in order to preaching, than a Sword is to cut one Bread with, or a Plough to ride on, though for other uses both are profitable. But the Wisdom absolutely necessary to preaching, or for a Preacher, is Divine Wisdom, which descends from Above more immediately, and comes from the Father of Lights,

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Lights, James 1. 5, 17. and in Scripture is put in opposition to the Wisdom before mentioned, 1 Cor. 1. from 17 downwards, *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the Wise? where is the Scribe? where is the Disputer of this World? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this World? &c.* So chap. 2. 1, 4, 7, 13. Brethren, when I came to you, I came not with excellency of Speech, or of Wisdom, declaring unto you the Testimony of God; and my Speech, and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of Power: Not the Wisdom of this World, nor the Princes of this World, that come to naught, but we speak the Wisdom of God, which God ordained before the World unto our glory. Which things also we speak, not the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual: The natural man receiveth not these things, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. And Peter tells us, that the Learned in the former sense, but unlearned or illiterate in the latter sense, are the Novices which do but wrest and pervert the Scripture, or the substance of all Scripture, 2 Pet. last, vers. 16. But more particularly, what this preaching Qualification or Wisdom is, I shall hereafter, the Lord assisting, discover.

From the Person spoken of, and that which of him is spoken, let me note these Observations.

Doct. 1. That Preaching by godly men, thereunto qualified, is God's Ordinance.

Secondly,

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Secondly, From the kind of Preacher that Solomon here spoke of, note, this Observation.

Doct. 2. *That Prophetical Preaching or Prophecy, by Members or Brethren of true Churches by virtue of Gifts and Membership, without Ministry, is God's very Ordinance.* Else Solomon, how wise soever, had sinfully preached.

Thirdly, Note, Doct. 3. *That such, or many Brethren as have Gifts and Abilities thus Preach, not onely may, but are bound to Preach.* Else Solomon had done more than his Duty, or what he was not bound to; which is vanity in to imagine, for he had not been wise in so doing.

Fourthly, Note, Doct. 4. *That every Gospel-Preacher ought to be wise; or that Grace and Spiritual Wisdom are the only Requisites, and sufficient for Gospel-preaching, or Preachers.*

To begin with the first of these, though the last of these is principally designed; Note, *The Preaching by Godly Men, thereunto qualified, is God's Ordinance.* For the proof of this, take the Testimonies, *Isa. 61. 1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to Preach glad-tydings to the Meek: He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the Captives, and the opening of the Prison to them that are bound, &c. Jonah 3. 2. Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great City, and preach unto it the Preaching that I bid thee. Mark 1. 4. John preached the Baptism of Repentance for the remission of sins; with chap. 3. 14. He ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach. Acts 5. 42. And daily in the Temple, and in every House, they ceased*

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not to Teach and Preach Jesus Christ; and chap. 10. 42. And he commanded us to preach unto the People; with Rom. 10. 15. How can they Preach except they be sent? Many other Scriptures would give testimony to this, were not this that is offered sufficient. But a little further, to clear this by Argument or Reason, since this, as every Truth, hath its Opposition or Opposers.

Reas. 1. Had not this been God's Ordinance, that the Word by Men should be Preached or Revealed unto men, the best of men would never have been found so often, even in all Ages, transgressing against the God of men, through preaching unto men; but the best of men have preached unto men. The Scripture shews us this in *Noah's* time, in that he was called a *Preacher of Righteousness*, 2 Pet. 2. 5. The like is said of *Abraham*, Gen. 18. 19. where *Abraham's* Teaching or Preaching, in and to his Household, is made the reason of God's Preaching or Declaring to him the destruction of *Sodom*. The like we have in chap. 49. 1, 2: So *Moses*, Dent. 31. 1, 2. with v. 19. compared also; you have it chap. 32. 1. So did *David*, Psal. 40. 9, 10. So *Solomon*, you have it in the Text. So *Samuel* in his first Book, chap. 12. 23. So in 2 *Chron.* 17. 7, and 9 compared. And thus did the New-Testament Converts and Disciples practise, *Acts* 8. 4. Therefore I conclude, that Preaching is, and ever was, acknowledged God's Ordinance.

Reas. 2. Had not Preaching been God's Ordinance, though godly men might have mistook their Duty, yet the Lord Jesus Christ would doubtless not have preached. But the Lord Jesus Christ

was

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was a Preacher, and did frequently preach; therefore Preaching is God's Ordinance. That the Lord Jesus Preached, is most evident, *Mark* 1. 14. with *Luk* 8. 1. *After John was put in Prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. He went Preaching, and shewing the glad-tydings of the Kingdom of God; and the Twelve were with him.*

Reas. 3. That which not onely Holy Men have approvedly done, and the Lord Jesus himself likewise did, but that which even Angels did teach, and commanded the Saints to do, that must needs be owned to be an Ordinance, as appears *Luk* 1. 26, to 37. *Luk* 2. 10, 11. *Rev* 14. 6. *I saw another Angel flie in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to Preach unto them that dwell on the Earth, &c.*

Reas. 4. That which God hath in all Ages most abundantly fitted some men for, must needs be his Ordinance: But God hath in all Ages fitted some men for Preaching-Work; therefore Preaching-Work is God's Ordinance. The proof of this lies most apparent in the first Argument, and is confirmed further to us, *Psal* 68. 11. *The Lord gave the Word, great was the Company of them that published it; compared with Ephes. 4. 8, 12. Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men: For the Perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ. Yea, he that saith, No man lighteth a Candle in vain, or to put it under a Bushel; Would not himself light so many Preaching-Candles, or make*

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So many Preachers in vain, if Preaching were not his Ordinance.

Reas. 5. Satan and finners would never have so opposed Preaching, had not Satan known that Preaching was God's Ordinance: Satan opposes not sin, no not the grossest wickedness; but the purest and the most powerful Preachers and Preaching he hath alwayes most eagerly opposed; witness *Micah, Zechariah, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul, Stephen*: And which of Christ's eminentest Preachers hath he not persecuted? witness *Acts 13. 49, 50.* And the Word of the Lord was published throughout all the Regions; but the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable Women, and the chief Men of the City, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their Coasts; compared with *Acts 17.* and *Rev.*

11. Yea, our own Times witness this, how much the design of the Devil and his Creatures is to obstruct and hinder the Spiritual Preaching of the Gospel: Like the Men Paul speaks of *1 Thess. 2. 15, 16.* Who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own Prophets, and have persecuted us, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins; for the Wrath is come upon them to the utmost.

Reas. 6. I might add that which not onely good Men have both practised, and been persecuted for; yea, both the Lord himself, and Angels have practised and Preached to us, as our Work, that must needs be God's Ordinance; but this both Christ and his Apostles have taught and enjoined us: Therefore to Preach is their Duty, as they are able to Preach, *Mat. 28. 19. Go, and teach*

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all Nations ; with 2 Tim. 4. 2. *Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and Doctrine,* with 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4.

First Use of Reproof.

But now by way of Application, this may serve for conviction or confutation of all such sensual, sinful, anti-scriptural men, as deny the Preaching of the Gospel to be God's, or a Divine Ordinance, but mens device and design to advance their honour or profit in the World. Do not some, that would not be thought to be small Fools; spurn Preaching as needless, uncertain, mens pride? Do not men say, What can the Preachers tell us, but what they have told us, and what we know already? Nay, are there not some, even too many whose pride will not suffer them to own the Preaching of the Word? To these let me speak that word of Solomon, Prov. 1. 22. *How long, simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and ye scorn delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge?* that such that presume to question this undoubted Truth of God, Preaching, even by men thereunto qualified, to be God's Ordinance; because men that Preach are not, nor ought to pretend to be infallible, would but consider this; Are none fit to Preach to you fallible, ignorant, shallow things, in things of Religion, but who are infallible? Did not Paul, that great Light, say, *That he knew but in part, and prophesied but in part?* Yet was admitted to be a Preacher in full, or a Preacher full worth hearing. What these say, argues no more against Preaching, than for a Scholar to say, My Master is not a Scribe or Teacher in perfection.

there

therefore I will not learn of him; yet may he be very able to teach the Scholar that he hath not yet learned. Even so may an imperfect Preacher be very sufficient to teach an imperfect Christian.

Secondly, Though the best of Preachers are, or may be, in some things fallible, much of what Spiritual Preachers teach is infallible; and you Hearers prove all things, refuse nothing, but hold fast only that which is good.

And *thirdly*, Though Preachers preach proudly, or may so do, yet hear Gospel-Preachers humbly, and the defect will be theirs, not yours. Else it will evidence pride in you not to hear such whom Christ appoints that you should hear; *Matth. 23. 2, 3. The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses Chair; All therefore that they bid you observe, that observe and do, &c.*

Fourthly, Are they covetous of your Wealth? be you never the less covetous, yea, more covetous of Christ's Treasury in their earthen Vessels; and remember Solomon's Counsel, *Buy the Truth, and sell it not; also Wisdom, Instruction, and Understanding; Prov. 23. 23.* And in so doing, you shall at most but do as every wise Merchant-man ought to do, when he had found one Pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it, *Mat. 13. 46.*

Fifthly, Do you know afore-hand what your Preachers will or can tell you, which is more than you know yet? Hear then, for if they can tell you no new things, they can tell what you should do with old things. If they can tell you no new things, they can tell you what you should do with

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old Truths, which you say you know: And arguing of yours, proves you have not yet learned even to practise what you know of God; for the *knowers*, but the *doers* of the Law shall be justified, *Rom. 2. 13.* And remember what Paul saith, in *2 Pet. 1. 12, 13.* *Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you alwayes in remembrance of the things, though you know them, and be established in the present Truth: Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to stir up your minds, by putting you in remembrance.* Oh therefore receive and consider this reproof, *Psal. 4.* *How long, ye Sons of Men, will ye turn my Glory in shame? How long will ye love vanity, and falsehood, or lying Arguments? And consider what the Lord saith to such as you are; O Generation that see the Word of the Lord; Have I been a Wilderness unto Israel? a Land of darkness? Wherefore say my People, We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee? Jer. 2. 31.* And to conclude the Use, think upon that Scripture, *Psal. 50. 22.* *Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.*

Second Use of Reproof.

This reproves such as own Preaching, yet oppose it; and these are not mean illiterate, but glittering, potent, even learned Enemies of the preaching of the Gospel; a Generation that are pure in their own eyes, but are not washed from their own filthiness, *Prov. 30. 12.* These are such that deal with Preachers, and Gospel-Preaching, as once he did with *Jeremiah*, of whom we read *ch. 32. 3.* where we have it, that *Zedekiah*, King of *Judah*, had shut him up, saying, *Wherefore dost thou*

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thou prophesie, and say, Thus saith the Lord ? Sinners cannot indure that God's Ministers should say, Thus saith the Lord. Thus dealt those with Amos, which said, O thou Seer, go flee thy way into the Land of Judah, and there eat Bread, and Prophecie, but Prophecie no more at Bethel, for it is the King's Chappel, and it is the King's Court, Amos 7. 12, 13. Oh that such Gospel-Opposers would but consider the two last Verses of this Chapter, and tremble, and not any more oppose and persecute the Gospel, and the faithful Preachers thereof. It is neither mens greatness in Authority, or excellency of Parts, will secure them from God's dreadful displeasure, except they repent. Oh how great is their sin, and how inexcusable will they one day be, that pretend love to Christ, and friendship to the Gospel, yet forbid the pure preaching thereof ! These are sinners of a double die, and it were well that they would all view and consider what Paul saith concerning them, 1 Thes. 2. 16. Forbidding us to Preach to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins allway ; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. This is not onely a crying, but a filling sin. Sure, the sins of the Romish Prelates and Powers, is full near the uttermost, that have so long persecuted, forbidding God's faithful Labourers to Preach the Gospel of Christ. I shall only offer one Scripture to such mens consideration, and so leave them under this reproof, Isa. 30. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Now go, write it before them in a Table, and note it in a Book, that it may be for time to come, for ever and for ever ; That this is a rebellious People, lying Children, Children that will not hear the Law of the

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Lord : Which say to the Seers, See not ; and to the Prophets, Propheſie not unto us right things ; ſpeak to us ſmooth things, propheſie deceits ; get ye out of the way, turn aſide out of the path ; cauſe the holy One of Iſrael to ceaſe from before us. Therefore thus ſaith the holy One of Iſrael, Becauſe ye deſpiſe this Word, and truſt in oppreſſion and perverseneſs, and ſtay thereon : Therefore this iniquity ſhall be unto you as a breach ready to fall, ſwelling out in a high Wall, whoſe breaking cometh ſuddenly at an inſtant, and he ſhall break it as the breaking of a Potters Veſſel that is broken in pieces, he ſhall not ſpare, ſo that there ſhall not be found, in the burſtings of it, a ſtread to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the Pit.

Third Uſe of Reproof.

A third Uſe of Reproof, from this conſideration, that Preaching of the Word is God's Ordinance, ſhall be, to reprove all ſuch Preachers of the Goſpel, as though not forbidden of men, yet forbid themſelves, and neglect this ſo great a Work, and Ordinance, as the Preaching of the Goſpel. Such idle Drones among the Bees, had need conſider that word 1 Cor. 9. 16. For though I Preach the Goſpel, I have nothing to glory of, for neceſſity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I Preach not the Goſpel : and woe will be unto ſuch as are able, and may, but do not preach the Goſpel. Yea, though men did forbid, yet woe unto him that will be forbidden by any ſort of men, and doth not ſaithfully and fully preach the Goſpel. Such ſleepy, idle, timorous, or unprofitable Preachers, that do not as the good Preacher did in my Text, and every good Preacher in the World ought to do

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Jo, that is, To give good heed, and diligently see in order Parables.

But I shall not enlarge upon these mens Reproof; hoping that a word to the Wise will be sufficient, which every Preacher (as my Text implies) ought to be. But to them, or so many Preachers of the Everlasting Gospel as are otherwise spirited, I would commend a Scripture or two to their consideration. The first is, *Wo to the idol Shepheard, that leaveth the Flock, the Sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye; his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye utterly darkned*: But why, O Lord? Mark, *Because he hath not visited those that he cut off, neither doth seek the young Ones, nor heal that which is broken, nor feed that which standeth still, but doth eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces*, Zach. 11. 16, 17. with Ezek. 13. 4, 5. O Israel! *thy Prophets are as the Foxes in the Desarts; yea, have not gone up into the Gaps, neither made up the Hedge for the House of Israel, to stand in the Battel in the Day of the Lord; therefore hear what the Lord saith, vers. 9. They shall not be in the Assemblies of my People, neither shall they be written in the writing of the House of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*

Fourth Use of Reproof.

But a fourth Use of Reproof is to such, and so many as own and acknowledge the preaching of the Gospel to be the Lord's Ordinance, and yet make not due and suitable improvement of it. God will one day say to these, without repentance, as to those of old; *Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips, do honour me, but have removed their heart far from*

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me, and their fear to me is taught by the precepts of men: Therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work, and a wonder; for the wisdom of the wise men shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent men shall be hid, Isa. 29. 13, 14. There are two sorts of persons to whom this Re- proof belongs:

First, Such as are careless in hearing the Word Preached.

Secondly, Such as are careless of doing of that, which by the preaching of the Word they are taught they ought to do, as well as know.

And I fear, how many soever there may be found under the first Reproof, or of the first sort, there are yet many more of the latter sort, even forgetful Hearers, deceiving their own souls, Jam. 1. 22, 25. First, Such sleepy, worldly, carnal, idle persons, that seldom can find time, and as seldom find an heart to come to hearing of the Word preached; though God bring it even to the doors, yet they can scarce move their feet over the threshold to come to it; but cry out, What need so much expence of time, or attendance upon Preaching? or else complement over their neglect, as those did that were invited to the Feast; make light of these opportunities or invitations, and cry, *Pray you have me excused, I have bought a piece of Ground, and I must needs go see it. And another, I have bought Oxen, and I must needs go prove them. And a third sort, I have married a Wife, and therefore I cannot come, Luke 14. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19.* But will these excuses serve to leave such men excusable, that neglect or omit to come to the hearing of the Gospel. Oh no! mark the close

of

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cept of these Neglecters work; *When the King heard do thereof, he was wroth, and he sent forth his Armies, and destroyed those Murderers, and burnt up their City,* Mat. 22. 7. And therefore remember, If the Gospel be hid, it is only hid this day to such as perish, 2 Cor. 4. 3.

Fifth Use of Reproof.

But lastly, and mostly, This Doctrine reproves all such, how great Hearers soever, as are at high-est but Hearers, not Doers of that they hear. Though it is good to hear, yet 'tis not good to hear and not to practise; it is bad not to hear, but is worse not to practise. That Servant must be beaten with many stripes, that knows his Master's Will and doth it not, *Luk. 12. 47.* Not the knowers, but the doers of the Word shall be blessed, *John 13. 17.* Oh! let such perverters of this so great and blessed an Ordinance, as is the Preaching of the Gospel, Consider, God will one day come, and call for an account of all the Sermons you have heard, and see what Fruit you bring forth, whether Fruit to Him or to your selves: And then will he deal with unfruitful Vines, barren Fig-trees, and unpractical Hearers, as with those we read of *Isa. 5. 5, 6. Hos. 10. 1, 2, 3.* with *Heb. 6. 7, 8.* Oh! it is no small sin, and shall have no small punishment to be an unpractical Hearer of the Word, and perverter of this so great an Ordinance.

But this may suffice for that first Use, to wit, a Use of Reproof.

The

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The second Use is of Vindication.

The next Use of this Point, shall be for Vindication or Justification of all such as are faithful, painful, diligent Preachers of the Gospel; who because Preaching of the Word is God's Ordinance, do Preach in season and out of season, whoever forbids or sayes to the contrary; saying as once Peter and John did, *Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye: For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard,* Acts 4. 19, 20. Where men have not sufficient power to command, it can be no sin there not to be obedient. So here, these knew neither this Council, nor any were from God intrusted with any such power, as to forbid or hinder the Preaching of the Word; therefore such Commands neither ought or need to be obeyed. Even so at this day, should the able Spiritual Preachers of the Word hold their peace, because men, even any sort of men, forbid them, or command them so to do; the very Stones in the Street, and the very Ashes of these Apostles, might cry out against them, and say in the words of the Text; *Whether it is right to obey God or Man, judge ye.* Oh! it will one day be dreadful, preferring Man's Commands before God's Commands, when God shall visit for this holding the Truth in unrighteousness, according to that expression, *Son of Man, I have set thee a Watchman unto the House of Israel, therefore hear the Word at my Mouth, and give them warning from me; When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest*

him

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him not warning, nor speakest to the wicked : Oh ! mark it, Nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand, Ezek. 3. 17. Oh ! is not this a terrible word to all silenced Preachers this day, that have learned to be silent at the word of a man, and let the wicked go without warning from them, forgetting what God saith, *Who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a Man, and the Son of Man, that shall be made graft, and forgettest the Lord thy Maker ?* Isa. 5. 12, 13. Therefore let such be this day cleared, and acquitted, as innocent, and approved with the Lord, as have not in such a day as this made the Commands of God of none effect through mens traditions, but, like *Levi*, have said to their Father and Mother, *I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge his Brethren, nor knew his own Children ; for they have observed thy Word, and kept thy Covenants* Deut. 33. 8. Oh ! when-ever you hear those Standard-bearers taxed, who have not fainted nor feared in such a day as this, but have humbly said, *Shall such a man as I flee ?* Shall such a man as I, whom Jesus Christ hath anointed and called to Preach the Gospel, shall I be dumb and silent ? I will not, I may not, I dare not be silent. Oh ! vindicate these, and when railed upon for faction, folly, and disobedience to Authority, pride, passion, and the like ; Oh ! then say as of old, *David* in a like case said, *Is there not a cause ?* 1 Sam. 17. 29. And you Worthies of *Israel*, be encouraged from the Word of the Lord, *Thou therefore gird up thy loyns, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee ;*

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thee ; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them, Jer. 1. 17. So much for this Use

The third Use is of Exhortation.

A third and last Use is for Exhortation ; First To Preachers, who are intrusted with this great Ordinance, and have this Word of Life in these earthen Vessels. Be faithful in the improvement of this great Ordinance.

Secondly, Let it speak, before we part, a parting-word or two to you that are Hearers. If the preaching of the Word be God's holy and precious Ordinance, then be exhorted both to hear, and not to despise him that speaketh on Earth, nor neglect so great Salvation, and also be exhorted to take heed how you hear.

First, Let the Preachers of the Gospel, I mean Christ's Spiritual Preachers, not Man's empty or dained Preachers, who are crept into Ministry for a morsel of bread ; I say, to you that are Christ's Witnesses and Preachers, preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, exhort with all long-suffering and gentleness ; because Preaching is God's Ordinance, and such bright Lights were not intended to be lighted in vain, it is our Lord's own expression, *Mat. 5.* Men do not light their Candles to put under a Bushel. Then let not glorious Lights be lighted in vain, but be diligent and laborious in this sin-condemning and Soul-saving Ordinance, remembering what *Paul* saith, *1 Cor. 4. 2.* *Moreover, it is required in a Steward, that he be found faithful ;* it will one day be required : Therefore in this day be faithful,

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ful, lest he that has given us Talents, which we have not hearts and wisdom to improve, do, to our shame and loss, recal them, and take them from us, and give them to him that hath improved, *Matth. 25. 28, 29, 30.* But because I shall have occasion to speak more to this hereafter in another Particular, I shall say no more to this part or branch of this Use at this time, but speak a few words to the second branch, which is ;

If Hearing be God's and not Man's Ordinance, then be exhorted, you that are or should be Hearers, to take heed how you hear, for God takes notice of you, both at Hearing, and when you omit and needlessly neglect to hear ; for he will not let his Name or Ordinances be taken in vain ; *Exod. 20. 7.* Remember that Text, *Eccles. 5. 1. Take heed to thy foot, when thou goest to the House of God, and be more ready to hear, than to offer the Sacrifice of Fools, for they consider not that they do evil.* Men and Women must not think 'tis hearing of men, but hearing of God by men, or through men, it is not Man's Word, or Ordinance, but God's ; therefore take heed, slight it not, dally not with it, the God of this most sacred Ordinance will not bear it at your hands : Harken what God saith, *2 Chron. 24. 19. Yet he sent unto them Prophets to bring them again unto the Lord, and they testified against them, but they would not give ear, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon Zachariah the Son of Jehoiada the Priest, which stood above the People, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the Commandment of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper ? because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you :* Compare

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pare with this, what you have *Mat. 23. 34, 35* 39. and then consider, if there be not need to receive this Exhortation, to take heed how you hear. Oh! be not sleepy, proud, unbelieving, forgetful, unthankful, or unfruitful hearers of the Word of God; for if the Lord Jesus, when he brought forth but barley Bread, and small Fishes, said *Gather up the Fragments*, and let nothing be lost do you think then he will let such precious Bread of Life, which none but the Son of Man can give you, be lost? *John 6. 12.*

Therefore to conclude, Take heed that you despise not him that speaketh from Heaven, in the Ministry of the Word. Consider it, and let that you refuse not him that speaketh; For if *tho* escaped not who refused him that spake on Earth much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven, *Heb. 12. 25.* Oh therefore be swift to hear, though slow to speak against what you hear; and let every one that hath ears to hear, hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches, *Jam. 5. 19. with Rev. 2. 7.* Thus much for this first Observation.

Dott. 2. That which I noted from the opening of the words, was, That *Prophetical Preaching, or Propheſſing by Saints, or Brethren, by vertue of Gifts, and Membership, without Office or Ministry conferred upon them, is God's very Ordinance, and a lawful way of Preaching.* Else Solomon, how wise soever, had sinfully Preached.

For the clearing of this Truth, consider first what the Scripture speaks to this point. First, *Moses* that well understood the Mind of God, was thus minded, when he spake these words, *Enviest thou*

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thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them, Numb. 11. 29. Two things among others we may note here.

First, That *Moses* did not envy or disallow the Prophesying or Preaching of any that the Lord had made able; and therefore puts by the envy and ignorance of those that did, with this reply; *Enviest thou for my sake?* as if he had said, you do evilly and sinfully in so doing.

Secondly, Observe *Moses*, how faithful soever in the House of God, and against Usurpations and Innovations in the Church, yet allows and approves that any one, and every such one that the Lord should put his Spirit upon and make able, might this do; even Prophesie or Preach. I would all the Lord's People were Prophets, could, and would Preach, for I shall not forbid them.

Object. 1. But if any shall Object, and say, *This is not to the thing in hand; For, first, these were eminent Elders and Officers, or Rulers among the people, and not private persons, or ordinary Members of the Church.*

I Answer, Though it be granted that these were such, even part of the *seventy*, yet note, they were not preaching Elders. Secondly, Neither preached they because such or such, but because they had the Spirit, and that moved, and also filled them with matter, and gave them utterance. Thirdly, Neither was this separation or pouring out of the Spirit mentioned *vers. 17.* the Spirit of Preaching, Gifts, or Qualifications, but the Spirit of Rule and Government, as is most clear, by considering what is offered, 'twas a portion of *Moses* Spirit

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Spirit to assist *Moses*, not in Preaching, but in Ror p
ling and Governing. fie :

Object. 2. But if any shall object to this testamony, That it *proves not the thing for which it is brought, because this was extraordinary prophesying, and these were immediate Prophets, and not ordinary, or such as the Doctrine intends.* and

I answer, True it is, these were extraordinary Pre Persons, but whether their Prophefying in the Me place spoken of were extraordinary Preaching Min Prophefying, doth not appear in this, or any other is c place that I know of, although I acknowledge Pre there is such a kind of Prophefying: But howeve onl this is clear from this place, That as many as t or c Lord will spirit, or qualifie, for one or other fort and Preaching, may, and ought to Preach: Else Mo in t had wished too much, and not answered the ca do; propounded; but this may serve for this Object gre on. wh

But take a second VVitnes, which you ha we 2 Chron. 17. 7, 8, 9, 10. where you find the the Jehoshaphat sent out his Princes, as well as his Prie oth and Levites, to Teach in the Cities of Judah, and wa the success was very glorious. A

But take a third VVitnes, 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11 thr where we have the Apostle, not only allowing peo but also provoking and enjoinning every man the Do feareth the Lord, to be a good Steward of the ma da manifold Grace of God; and he that hath receive tha that Gift of speaking a word in season, is to min Gi after, and to speak according to that ability Go and for giveth. fon

Take but one more, 1 Cor. 14. 29, 31. when len the Apostle allows, and directs all the Prophets o

For prophesying Brethren in the Church, to Prophe-
 sie: Yea, he asserts the truth of this Doctrine,
 and justifies this for a lawful and laudable practice,
 for so many in the Churches of the Saints, as have
 preaching Gifts to Preach, saying, *You may all pro-
 phesie one by one; and let the Prophets prophesie;
 and let no man forbid, or envy it:* And thus the
 Preacher in my Text preached, as a Prophet, or
 Member of the Church, not officially, or as a
 Minister ordained unto this Work of Preaching,
 is clear. For by Office he was a King, not a
 Preacher; such were the high Priests and Levites
 only; but our Preacher was a Membral Preacher,
 or one exercising his Gifts according to his Liberty
 and Duty. Yea, our Lord Jesus, who preached
 in the Jewish Synagogue, and was allowed so to
 do; thus he preached in the account of the Con-
 gregation, not by virtue of that anointing by
 which he was Christ, and Lord: For though he
 were so, yet they knew it not, nor allowed it;
 they only gave him the liberty and priviledge of
 other Members of the Church: Such a priviledge
 was given to *Paul* and the rest of his Companions,
Acts 13. 15. when they said, *Ye Men and Bre-
 thren, if you have any word of Exhortation for the
 people, say on.* By all which we may see this
 Doctrine witnessed unto, and confirmed, beyond
 danger of any grounded or sober denial; to wit,
 that every one that hath received the Spirit, and
 Gifts for Preaching, may, yea ought to Preach
 and Exercise them. But let me give you a few Rea-
 sons or Arguments to inforce this.

Reas. 1. Else many should have Gifts and Ta-
 lents for Preaching-work in vain; but the Scrip-

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ture tells us, God made nothing in vain, in first or natural Creation: Even so the Lord Jesus in the new Creation, hath dispensed nothing in vain, but for use and profit; as we find it expressed in *Ephes. 4. 12.* It is the edifying of the Body, which is his end, in giving Prophets as well as Ministers to the Church: But what edification the Church have from such mens Gifts, although they have sufficient Gifts to edifie the Church, yet have no liberty so to do; unless, as our Opposers would have it, they will undertake Ministry and Ordination, which many that are sufficiently qualified for propheticall Actions, are not sufficiently qualified for ministerial Employments.

Reas. 2. What we are bound to pray for to be enjoying of, that we are to promote the attaining of: But we are to pray that the Lord's Harvest may not want Labourers; therefore we are, if enabled so to be, even to be found labouring, not loitering in the Lord's Vineyard. That we are thus to pray, you find *Luke 10. 2.* with *Matt. 9. 37, 38.* *The Harvest is truly great, but the Labourers are few: Pray ye therefore the Lord to increase the Harvest, that he would send forth Labourers into his Harvest.* Therefore all such as are able to Labour, should go into the Harvest, and there labour in the Word and Doctrine, and not be idle, and only pray that the Labourers should be sent.

Reas. 3. If not preaching, when able to Preach, be a thing that God will punish for; then surely it must be lawful for who-ever is able to Preach, to be found even so doing: But that such as have Gifts, and do not use and exercise them in Preaching, shall be punished, if not found Preaching, is more clear

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clear : Therefore for all such to Preach as are able, must needs be lawful. That this is so, examine these Scriptures, *Matth. 24. 45. Who then is a faithful and wise Servant, whom the Lord hath made Ruler over his Household, to give them meat in due season : But if that evil Servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and eat and drink with the Drunken ; The Lord of that Servant shall come in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with Hypocrites ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* The like we have in *chap. 25.* where you have the sad judgment of the unprofitable Servant, that though he had not Talents, yet one small Gift or Talent ; *Cast ye the unprofitable Servant into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* Take but one more ; *Necessity (saith Paul) is laid upon me, and wo unto me if I preach not the Gospel, 1 Cor. 9. 16.*

Reas. 4. This is God's way though not Man's ; to fit Persons for Ministerial Employments : Therefore to Preach without Ministry in order to a qualification or fitness for Ministry, must needs be lawful and approved. That this is God's way of preparing men for Ministerial Dignity, is most clear, *Acts 1. 21, 22.* where Peter tells the Church, That of those men that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out amongst us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his Resurrection ; And this is that favour which the Lord promised in that Parable that he spake concerning the Talents ; That unto every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance. Now this is the way to attain honourable

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34 The Gospel-Preacher's

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able Imployment in the Ministry, to be sound faithful and fruitful in the work of Prophecy. Having proved and cleared the Point, let me now make some Application.

The first Use is of Vindication.

The first shall be for Information or Vindication of all such Persons or Churches, which suitable to this Doctrine, thus practise, and thus do, even improve and exercise what Gift or Gifts the Lord hath intrusted them with for Preaching-work; freely, willingly, faithfully, and humbly, as they have opportunity in publick Assemblies, and Church-Fellowships, though they be neither Prophets nor Prophets Sons; that is, neither educated in humane litteral Arts, nor called or admitted into any Office of Ministry, yet do Preach as the Spirit gives them utterance: I say, according to what hath been proved and opened in the Doctrine, That the way and work of such is lawful; for ye may all, that fear the Lord, and are able, Prophesie one by one, Women only excepted: I say, not only he that hath five Talents, but he that hath but one Talent, may publickly by Preaching improve it. Mark, I say not as some would have it, that he that hath no Talent may Preach, but every one only that fears the Lord, and hath some sufficient degree or measure of Gifts for so doing; Even he I do assert may and ought to Preach as he hath opportunity, and let the Prophets judge, 1 Cor. 14. 29, 32. Therefore know and consider this day, ye Rabbies of the World, ye learned, separated, and anointed Sons of *Levi*, I mean you
Clergy-

Clergy-men, who are, or would be, the sole ingrossers and monopolizers of all Preaching-work in your own hands, as the alone Sons *Eli*; reproaching and condemning the Preaching of the Gospel by Illiterate or Mechanick men, Lay-men, or Trades-men, as you please to call them, as not only foolish and disorderly, but an incroachment and usurpation upon the Priest's Office, even the Sin of *Corab*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*; never remembering, as you ought, what the Lord saith, *Have you never read, Out of the mouth of Babes and Sucklings thou hast perfected praise*, Matth. 21. 16.

But since this Doctrine, if not too dark, is notwithstanding derogatory to the honour, reputation, and profit of the Learned Preachers of this day, I shall a little consider of their learned, but misapplied Objections.

Object. 1. *How can the Preaching of the Brethren, or private Christians, in or unto the Church, be paralleld with the Act of those in that of Numb. 16. those reproached Ministry, even God's faithful Ministers, Moses and Aaron, crying out, You take too much upon you, vers. 3, 4. but so do not the Propheying Ones, they own Christ's Ministers and Official Ones, and their Preaching and Administrations to be of Christ, and not too much for such alone to be ministerially exercised in; and so did not those.*

Secondly, *These were Ministers, but not content with their own Function or Ministry, they aspired to another higher, even Aaron and Moses's Ministry, as appears vers. 9, 10, 11. But the Prophets that pretend to a liberty to Preach, neither pretend or af-*

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firm that every Preacher is an Official or Ordained Minister of the Lord Jesus; neither do they aspire to equality or superiority with or above others Christ's Ministering Ones, but acknowledge they are neither the one nor the other of Christ's Gospel Ministry, but Members in particular.

But thirdly, Note, There is no agreement between the design of those men, and the work of the men I plead for, their design was sacrificing or offering Incense, the work onely of Aaron, and his Sons, 'twas Censuring, not Preaching, as is clear verl. 15, 16, 17, 18. But the highest of those men or this Doctrine's design, is Preaching, not offering or performing Ministerial Function, but private Mens and Brethrens liberty, as hath been proved from that passage, Ye may all prophesie or Preach one by one. To as little purpose will that Text answer our Clergy-mens design and errand for which they improve, as this Numb. 16. I mean the 1 Cor. 7. 20. Let every Man abide in the same Calling wherein he was called.

This might, if it had been written at that time, have been applyed aptly by Moses in the business he had in-hand; but what is all this against the lawfulness of private Christians Preaching. Preaching, though an excellent Work, is no peculiar Calling, but may be performed by Persons of another Calling; neither do such as assert our practice in this way of Preaching, depart from their Callings, or not abide therein, though this is no satisfaction to their Adversaries: therefore these feeble Objections will not suffice to rational Christians enlightened in this Doctrine, as sufficient to oppose this way of Preaching. Therefore know and consider

Ordain consider this day what I shall affirm, till you can more
 they aspi substantially oppose it; to wit, That it is lawful
 others and laudable, a Liberty, yea, a Duty incumbent
 they a upon every Man that feareth the Lord, and hath
 bel M received the Gift, to speak a word in due season
 for Edification, Exhortation, and Comfort, to use
 ment b and exercise the Gifts he hath received of the Lord
 of the in Prophesying or Preaching in the Congregation,
 g or o That all may learn, and all may be edified, 1 Cor.
 and b 14. 31. Therefore not onely may Pastors, or
 is cle Teachers, but any Brother of the Church that is
 se men qualified, whether Young or Old, Servant or Ma-
 offering ster, Son or Father, Rich or Poor, Learned or
 priva Unlearned, of what Employment or Calling so-
 prove ever, whether Miller or Merchant, Inn-keeper or
 Preach Shoop-keeper, Brick-layer or Taylor, Cobler or
 xt an Shoo-maker, one or other lawful Employment,
 which For ye are all one in Christ Jesus, Gal. 3. 8. Thus
 the much for this Use.

The second Use is for Exhortation.

But a second Use, and the all that I shall make
 of this Doctrine, is, That if Prophesying or Preach-
 ing of Brethren, or such as have not received any
 Office or Ministry from Christ, be an Ordinance of
 Christ, and the duty of such as have received Gifts
 for Preaching to Preach. Then two things from
 hence I may add,

First, A word of Exhortation to all the Churches
 of the Saints, to allow, adm't, and encourage the
 Gifted-Brethren in this Work and Business of
 Preaching. Oh! be not so like to Antichrist and
 his Synagogue, as to forbid this liberty of the

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Saints, which Christ hath so dearly purchased with his most precious Blood. Consider what the Lord saith to those Disciples of his, who told him, *That they saw one casting out Devils in his Name, which followed him not, and they forbid him*; but Mark the Answer of Christ, *Forbid him not*, Mark 9. 38, 39. Will not Christ have such forbid that follow not him, or his Disciples, and will you my Brethren forbid such as follow the Lamb, (yea, and follow you too) because not Ministers as you are, or competent or equal in Gifts with you? My Brethren, I beseech you do not this wickedness, it smells of Rome, of an Antichristian spirit; but think what the Lord saith, *He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad*, Mat. 12. 30. You that will not joyn issue with Christ in furthering and permitting such to Preach whom Christ allows to Preach, you, even all you, who ever you be, how Wise, and Learned, and Pious soever, yet are you against Christ, and for Antichrist; Enemies to Preaching, though never so great Preachers; and it were well you would please to suffer me to commend two Scriptures to your serious consideration. The first is that of the Apostle, *Be of the same mind one towards another; mind not high things, but condescend to men of low degree, or estate: Be not wise in your own conceits*, Rom. 12. 16. The second Scripture is that of Peter, *Feed the Flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof; not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being Lords over God's Heritage, but being Examples to the Flock*, 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3.

But

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But secondly, Let this be a second Branch of this Use to exhort all such, even such, or so many as have received but one Talent, or the least degree of real competency or fitness, though neither Prophets or Prophets Sons, but of the meanest or most contemptible condition or Calling amongst men to Preach, and that in season and out of season. O remember it is your duty, your Priviledge, you may preach all one by one; you are not only made Kings, but Priests; and this Priestly Act you, yea, any Gifted Believer may perform, *Rev. 1. 6.* Beloved, Preaching is God's Ordinance, his Peoples Blessing, and your Duty. O therefore! Preach as well as Pray continually, & forget not that exhortation, *As every Man hath received the Gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold Grace of God, 1 Pet. 4. 10.* Brethren, let not your fellow Spies discourage you, by telling you of the Sacredness, Excellency, and difficulty of Preaching; *But as every man hath received, so minister the same, as of the ability God giveth, that in all things God may be glorified, 1 Pet. 4. 11.* Remembring, for your encouragement, two Scriptures, *2 Cor. 8. 12. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted, according to that a man hath, and not according to that a man hath not.* Secondly, Think on these words of Christ, *For unto every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath, Mat. 25. 29.* Therefore quench not the Spirit, *1 Thess. 5. 19.* But what the Disciple said, I may say to you, *The Lord hath need of it, Luke 19. 34.* The Souls of Sinners call for your Labours; yea, the wants of
your

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your dear Brethren call for your words of Exhortation, Edification, and Comfort; therefore, be not wanting in the practice of this Ordinance, even this great Ordinance of Preaching the Gospel. *Therefore, my Brethren, be stedfast, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in the Work of the Lord; for as much as you know your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Thirdly, Let this Doctrine exhort and quicken you that have ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches. Take heed that you *despise not prophesying*, 1 Thessl. 5. 20. Christians, despise not Christ's day of small things, Since *out of the mouths of Babes and Sucklings, he will ordain strength, because of the enemy and avenger*, Psalm 8. 2. compared with *Matth. 21*. Say not in your hearts as once *Nathaniel* did; *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* John 1. 46. But take heed you *despise not him that speaketh on Earth*, lest that sad word be your word, *For with stammering lips, and another tongue, will he speak to this People*. Read that Chapter at your leisure, and you shall see how dreadful God speaks to despisers of this Ordinance of Preaching, though by mean and outwardly contemptible Instruments: My Beloved, know God oft-times hangs great Blessings at the end of small Wyes. How great a victory did God give *Israel* by that Barley Cake, as *Gideon* is called, *Judg. 7. 13, 14, 15, 16*. As also how great a Blessing did *Naaman the Syrian* receive, by hearing the Voice of his Servants, *2 Kings 5*. Yea, how great advantage did this very Ordinance bring to the *Jews and Greeks*, when the scattered Saints and Brethren went up and down, Preaching

and

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and Prophesying, *Acts* 11. 19, 20, 21. Therefore despise not Prophesying, I mean Preaching, by Brethren that are gifted thereunto, although not Ministers or Officers in the Churches. So much for this second Doctrine.

I should now come to speak to the third Point, or Doctrine, which is,

Doct. 3. *That if Preaching be God's Ordinance, and Propheſying and Preaching by Men of Grace and Gifts, though no Ministers, or Ordained Persons, may lawfully Preach; then ſuch as are Prophets, though no Ministers or Officers of the Church, not only may, but ought to Preach.*

But becauſe I have ſpoke ſomething to this in the cloſe of the ſecond Doctrine, I ſhall ſay no more to this, but proceed to the fourth and laſt Doctrine upon this Head, which is drawn from the Deſcription of the qualification of this Prophetical Preacher Solomon; to wit, That he was Wiſe, as you have it in the Text, *Moreover, becauſe the Preacher was Wiſe.* Whence take this Obſervation, to wit,

Doct. 4. *That every Goſpel preacher ought to be truly wiſe, or that Grace and Spiritual Wiſdom are the true and onely, and ſufficient Requiſites or ſufficiency for Goſpel-preaching.*

Let me, in the carrying on this Work, firſt clear this Point, and ſhew what this Wiſdom, which every Preacher ought to have, is.

2ly, Give the Reaſons why what is affirmed to be the Wiſdom required, is that which is affirmed.

And 3ly, Reſolve ſome Objections.

And laſtly, Make Application of the Point.

Fiſt,

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First, Take some Witnesses that Gospel-Preachers ought to be Wise. This the Lord tells us that qualification, that all such ought to have draw near him in any peculiar or especial way of service or ministration, as you have it laid down by Moses, in that saying, *Take you wise men, ye understanding and known men among your Tribes, and I will make them Rulers over you.* And mark what is further said; *And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken, is good for us to do; So I took wise men, and known, even the chief of your Tribes, and made them Heads over you;* this is God's and Moses way for the serving of Israel, Deut. 1. 13, 14, 15. Again, take that place, Prov. 15. 2. where you have this expression, *The Tongue of the Wise useth knowledge aright; but the mouth of Fools poureth out foolishness.* Oh mark! it is the wise tongue that will Preach or use Knowledge aright; compare this with what we have Vers. 7. *The lips of the Wise disperse Knowledge, but the heart of the Foolish doth not so;* It is wise lips either can or ought to Preach, or dispense Divine Knowledge. Again, take that Passage of our Lord Jesus, where he tells us what every Scribe or Teacher in Israel should be, *one instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, like unto a man that is a Householder, that bringeth out of his Treasury things both new and old.* Oh! this is the good Scribe or Preacher, Mat. 13. 52. the like you have *Matth. 10. 16.* with *Prov. 1. 5, 6.* further you have this confirmed, That a Preacher or Director of others should be wise; *Eccles. 1. 10.* for he that sendeth a Message by the hand of a Fool, cutteth off the feet, and drinketh dammage: *The legs of the lame*

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same are not equal; even so is a Parable in the mouth of fools, Prov. 26. 6, 7. By all which, with many Testimonies more that might have been offered, you have this Truth confirmed, That every Gospel-Preacher ought to be wise.

Now I come to open the Point, and shew you what it is to be Wise, or what that Wisdom is that every Gospel-Preacher ought to have. I told you in the opening of the words, by way of Negation, that the Wisdom spoken of in the Text, was neither natural, moral, or acquired Wisdom, as Languages, Tongues, Arts, or Sciences; but a more sublime and transcendent Wisdom. I told you, God had not set this Ax or Hammer apart to do his or this Work with; these Tools are strangers to any Divine designment for such an end, being neither appointed or required in Scripture. I told you, secondly, This Wisdom is but a carnal or natural Weapon, and is only meet for carnal, natural, weak, and worldly work; and for such purposes this Learning or Wisdom is very fit and useful, but no more apt or necessary essentially for Preachers, or Preaching, than a Sword is to cut ones Beard with, or a Plough to ride a Journey on: But the Wisdom absolutely necessary for Preaching, or a Preacher, is Divine Wisdom, as I told you, which descends from Above more immediately, and comes from the Father of Lights; and this is that true Wisdom which is put in opposition to the Wisdom before mentioned, 1 Cor. 1. 17. where the Apostle saith, *Christ sent him not to Baptize, but to Preach the Gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be of none effect: Mark, it's worldly Wisdom, or the wisdom of words,*

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words, maketh Christ's Cross to be made ineffectual; this is the likelyest good worldly Wisdom will do in Preaching. The same thoughts was the Apostle *Peter* of, censuring humane Wisdom, that it might, and did furnish men to pervert, but not to Preach the Gospel, where he saith, *As also in his Epistles, speaking in them of these things, which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction:* Ye therefore, Beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest you also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness, 2 Pet. 3. 16, 17. Now if you would know who these unlearned and unstable wresters and perverters of *Paul*, and of all Scriptures are, *Peter* tells us not men wanting Arts and Languages, such knew these things, as you have it, *seeing you know these things*; but they he describes and calls unlearned, are those he mentions in the second Chapter of this Epistle, whom he calls false Prophets, and false Teachers. Note, It is not the unlearned Hearers, but the learned Preachers that are the perverters and deceivers of the People, through mistaking *Paul's* Writings, and other Scriptures.

These are the Men the Church and the World are only beholden to, for privily bringing in damnable Heresies, and causing the Truth of God to be evil spoken of, *Vers. 1, 2.* These are the *Brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speaking evil of the things they understand not*, even the Saints and the Scripture, and the waies of God, *Vers. 12.* These learned Prophets are the *wicked*

wit hoo

without water, and the Clouds carried with a Tempest, vers. 17. These are the men that Speak great swelling words of vanity, and allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in Error. So that we may boldly conclude, That Humane Learning and Wisdome, is neither Prophets nor Preachers wisdome, or fit furniture for such work. But because I foresee that *Demetrius*, and his learned Crafts-men will make no small stir about this Doctrine concerning *Humane Learning*, I shall lay down some Arguments to back and confirm what hath been said.

Arg. 1. If Humane Wisdome or Learning be essential to qualifie a Preacher for preaching, then the *Scripture* Rule concerning a *Preachers* qualification is imperfect and obscure, which is sinful to imagine; because it neither requireth, or provideth for such low, earthly-membring Qualifications, as *Tongues* and *Sciences*, which teaches Preachers not to preach without it: What the *Scripture* requires as a Preachers Qualification, you may read *1 Acts* 4. 5. It is the promise of the *Father*, expounded *vers. 5.* to be the Baptism of the *Holy Ghost*; So *1 Timoth. 2. 2.*, to the *7. 2 Tim. 2. 2.* and *15.* with *Chap. 3. 14, 15, 16, 17.*

Arg. 2. If Humane Learning, or Wisdome be the *Preachers* Wisdome, then the best of *Preachers* have slighted and neglected the main, or grand Qualification, *1 Corin. 2. 1.* And I, Brethren, when I came unto you, I came not unto you with excellency of Speech, or of Wisdome declaring unto you the testimonies of God: And Paul gives the rea-
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son of his so doing: *For I determine not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, Verſ. 2.* and again ſaith he, *My Speech, and my Preaching was not with enticing words of mans wiſdome, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, verſ. 4.* yet Paul would have the Rabbies, and Sticklers for enticing words, and mans wiſdome know, That his illiterate Preaching, was perfectly accompliſhed Preaching; *Howbeit we ſpeak wiſdome among thoſe that be perfect, yet not the wiſdome of this world, nor of the Princes of this world, that come to nought, verſ. 6.* Take but one place more, *Act. 4. 13. Now when they ſaw the boldneſs of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned, and ignorant men, they marvelled: mark, theſe marvelous Preachers had preached moſt publickly, and reſolved ſtill to preach as publickly, yet neither had this Wiſdome or Learning, but were ignorant and unlearned, and reſolved ſo to remain. Therefore clear it is, this wiſdome is not Preachers wiſdome, elſe theſe great Preachers could not have wanted it; or which is all one, if they had it, improving it about this great work, which ſome ſay doth ſo fit men for it; Therefore this Wiſdome in Controverſie cannot be Preachers wiſdome.*

Thirdly, Take this Argument to prove that Humane Learning is not the Preachers Wiſdome, becauſe then many both allowed, and enjoined to Preach, would be found unable to preach, through want of this furniture or wiſdome: as many of the Prophets, or prophesying Members of the Church, who though they have the gifts of the Spirit, and have paſſed through the New-birth,

yet,

yet have never attained this Wisdome, or sat at Gamaliel's Feet; But such may be allowed of as competent Preachers, as I have largely proved in the *Second Doctrin*.

Arg. 4. The consideration of who is the Spring of Gospel-preaching, will make it necessarily appear that humane Wisdom is not the Preachers Wisdom, but the Lord Jesus, and not man's how learned soever, *Ephes. 4. 7, to 15. Unto every one of us is given Grace, according to the measure of the Gift of Christ*, and so forward, compared with *Rev. 19. 10.* which saith, *The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecie.*

Arg. 5. Take this Argument, why I affirm that the Wisdom that the Gospel-Preacher ought to have, is not humane Learning or Wisdom, because the Gospel is that which is to be Preached, not humane Wisdom or Excellency, nor the Gospel in a way of humane Wisdom or Excellency: Nay, the Gospel is in the very nature thereof contrary to humane Excellency, being plain and simple, though most holy and pure in the Nature and Administrations thereof, therefore needs not Arts or Sciences to comprehend or reveal it: Nay, the Apostle seems to imply, that Learning mixed with, or used in the Preaching of the Gospel, doth but corrupt, or sophisticate, and adulterate it, as the Fly doth the Apothecaries Box of Oyntment, *Eccles. 10. 1. 2 Cor. 2. 17.* But to proceed,

Arg. 6. Take this Argument; The Subjects or Persons to whom the Gospel is to be preached or predicated, are not the Orators, Wise, and Excellent of Wit; but the Simple, the Vulgar, the Mean and Contemptible, according to that word,

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Mat. II. 5. The poor have the Gospel preached to them, 1 Cor. I. 26, 27, 28. And Christ said That he was anointed to Preach the Gospel to the poor: Therefore they need not learned, that humanely learned Preachers, but spiritual Physicians: What need French-men to speak to them that only understand English? Or need Man Geometry or Mathematick, Logick or Rhetorick, to Preach to Men and Women of no humane Understanding? Only God hath promised to teach them so much spirituality as concerns their Souls: But as to this glorious literature, but as the gilded Trappings upon an Ass to make him to be respected.

Arg. 7. To require or injoyne humane Learning or Wisdom, as necessary or essential to every Gospel-Preacher, is to require that for a requirement which is directly contrary to the main end of Gospel-Preaching; which is to Preach Christ, and his Knowledge unto the People, and not to Preach the Preacher or his Knowledge into the People; the great end of Gospel-Preaching, is not to Preach forth, or declare man's breeding or learning into the People; or to shew the Preachers excellency in humane things, or excellencies, or breeding up men in worldly or humane Knowledge; but to bring men from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God, and to edifie and build up such as are converted to the Knowledge and Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Arg. 8. If the Church, even every unlearned Church in humane Learning must judge and follow the Prophets, then certainly this must not be a Preaching

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Preaching excellency and qualification, of which they have no share, nor can pass any competent judgment but they must try them, as you have it, *1 Thess. 5. 21. Prove all things, hold fast that which is good*; compared with *1 Job. 4. 1. Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the World*; Therefore this Learning cannot be the Preaching qualification.

Arg. 9. And lastly: What need of these Arts, Logick, Grammar, or Rhetorick, for opening of *Moses* and the Prophets, or proving that *Jesus Christ* is come in the flesh? Oh! bring better proof for Universities and Colledges, or else never plead for these impure puddles, and streams of impure waters for Preaching the Gospel.

But since this Truth and Argument lies so cross to some mens Interest, and other mens Understanding, I shall willingly consider of such Objections as I have met with, and indeavour to try their strength, and try whether their strength, or the power of this Doctrine will prevail; and be pleased to excuse me if I enlarge upon this Head, since this Doctrine is so hotly, yea, so seemingly Scripturally opposed. Therefore I shall take the more pains to clear to your Understandings and Consciences, that the Learning and Wisdom which a Gospel-preacher needs for Gospel-preaching is not acquired humane Learning, or Wisdom, but is Spiritual and Divine; for a man without Spiritual Wisdom, though a Scholar, and furnished with all Arts and Sciences, is but like a Crow made outwardly gay with other Birds Feathers, yet underneath he is a Crow still for all his outward brave-

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ry. Therefore be pleased to consider of a few Scriptures, and weigh the scope and tendency of them as that first, when the Lord promiseth to do great things for the conversion of sinners, and lifting up of the Kingdom, where he tells us who shall be the Ambassadors and Preachers in that Work. Not the Wise, with this beggarly wisdom of the flesh, but a quite contrary Generation, to wit, the foolish and the simple, even *Babes and Sucklings*. *Isa. 29. 9. to 21.* where we have these things ordered; first, That in the dayes of the Gospel-exaltation, when *Lebanon* the true Church shall become a real fruitful Field, and the false Church *Lebanon* of foolish Virgins or Professors, shall be turned into a Forrest; then shall this be fulfilled. God's Book shall not be read to the People by the learned Ones, for they shall say and confesse, as well as the unlearned, I cannot read no more than the unconverted People or Multitude, and this shall not be the care of idle Ones, or by accident, but by the great design of God to glorifie himself another way, as he saith, *I will do a marvellous work, and a wonder, for I will turn the wisdom of your prudent men backwards, and the meek in the Earth shall increase their joy, or divine knowledge* and have my Vision opened to them, and by them *vers. 18, 19.* therefore humane Wisdom and Knowledge is not a Tool fit for this Work.

Object. 1. But it is Objected, *This was spoken of the Jews and Priests of that time, and concerns not us.*

To which I Answer, Grant that it were spoken of that Age first, yet not of them only; for it appears to the Spiritual, Wise, and truly Learned,

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to be spoken of the way of God's dealing under the Man of Sin in the end of his dayes, as appears *vers. 20, 21.* when the Lord saith, *The terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off &c. That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.*

How truly these things are accomplished by the Man of Sin, is most evident; therefore you may see, how clearly the former words concern his learned Clergy, will e're long be manifest; and it is most clear, these Words or Prophecies are to be accomplished in that day when the Church shall be most fruitful; but that is not in the day of the Jews apostacy or defection: but this Glory is a reserved Glory for that day, when the Kingdoms of this World shall become ~~the~~ Kingdoms of our Lord, and he shall reign for ever-more, even that good Day which is coming upon us.

But again, let any one shew me that the way of the Lord here spoken of is changed, and that now our Lord Jesus Christ hath sanctified Wisdom and Learning for Preaching-work, and is become reconciled to it, then they will say something to the Point that they contend for: But the Scriptures of the New Testament know no such reconciliation, as appears *Matth. 11. 25.* *I thank thee, O Father, thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to Babes,* *Luk. 10. 21.* compared with *1 Cor. 1. 20, 21.* *Where is the Wise? where is the Scribe? where is the Disputer of this World? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this World? For after that, in the*

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wisdom of God, the World by wisdom knew not God; it pleased God, by the foolishness of Preaching, to save them that believe; and vers. 19. it is written I will destroy the wisdom of the Wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent; with chap. 2. 1. And I Brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom declaring unto you the Testimony of God. Where we have Paul answerably practising and vindicating his so doing; wherefore if by any other ground more helpful to them, than what they have offered, they be able to prove that the Lord Christ has taken their blunt Tools into favour, I desire them to declare it.

But again, consider that passage of *Zacharias* 13. concerning this learned Generation of the Man of Sin's Clergy-men, it is said, *In that day they shall voluntarily be ashamed, every one of his Vision*; I hope not of Christ's, or the Gospel Vision, but of the learned Vision, Education, and Trade of Preaching; which is most clear, both with reference to the rise of this way of Preaching, and also the matter of this Preaching; and lastly, the end of it. All that is there said, relates to the Preaching or Prophesying of our Times, and not of the Jews Time, they having no such Trade in fashion as an Artificial-Clergy, they having only the Tribe of *Levi* Prophets, and *Nazarites*. Neither would Tongues, Languages, Arts, or Sciences, help to Preach in that day, when only or primarily Prophecie and Ceremony were to be Preached. Therefore this Prophecie relates principally to our Time, as a Prophecie of the Prophets or Clergy-men of the Man of Sin, and I shall pray,

pray, Come Lord Jesus, and make haste to shew
these Prophets.

But again, I pray consider, when *Paul* directs
to the choice of Ministers, I mean, Preaching-
Ministers, he doth not once name or remember
this great *Diana*, I mean, humane Learning, but
layes down Rules for choice without this expedi-
ent, 1 Tim. 3.

Object. 2. But possibly some may say, Is it not
there said, Let not him that is chosen be a Novice?
and is not that as much as to say, unlearned, or un-
skilful in learning?

To which I Answer, *Alas* but our learned
Tribe Novices? God forbid they should think so,
or the Lord's Peoples Portion be no better, for then
none besides the Learned should have been capable
of choice; but *Paul* acknowledgeth that the *Co-
rinths* were wise, not only their Ministers, but
they, 1 Cor. 1. 4, 5. with *Epist.* 2. 11. 19. But
to Answer this more fully; *Paul* intends onely a
young, unskilful, unexperienced Christian, and
not a young Grammarian or Logician; for he may
be as proud as any that hath most skill in Arts; as
many Instances shew: and this is the reason laid
down by the Apostle, why he must not be a No-
vice, lest he be puffed up with pride; and surely
if the learning here meant be *Oxford & Cambridge*,
I mean of the Schools; *Paul* it seems knew men
were very quick to know what learning he meant,
since Scripture and himself knew another Learning
better, which the Scriptures shew as I have offered;
or else he foresaw men would, as at this day, ido-
lize and dote upon these painted Feathers; where-
fore he saith, if any thing, but very little for this

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University-breeding, cryed up as so absolutely necessary for Preaching, although the Scriptures know nothing of it.

Object. 3. But some may say, *Are not the Schools of the Prophets mentioned in Scripture, as in the place 2 Kings 22. 14? Is it not said, that Huldah the Prophetess dwelt in a Colledge? and had not the Prophets peculiar places of residence and habitation; wherein, as in Universities or Nurseries of Learning, they studied and improved themselves in order to Preaching or Propheying, as we read 2 Kings 2. 3, 5. so Acts 19. 9. If there were any more of these Colledges, I should have considered them also, but so many have onely come to my knowledge.*

To all those Scriptures I Answer, they do not in the least oppose the Truth I have asserted, that not Humane but Spiritual Wisdom fits for Preaching the Gospel of Christ. For grant that these places intended Colledges and Universities, and such like places, yet it follows not that these were places imployed or improved for Trayning, or preparing Persons for Gospel-preaching; for it doth not appear that any Gospel-preachers issued forth from thence.

And secondly, The Prophets and Prophetesses we read of, were extraordinary Prophets, and not such Preachers or Prophets as the Doctrine intends and speaks of; but if Schools and Universities will fit us to be such Prophets as can declare things to come from the Lord, then let us all, that fear the Lord, go to these Schools that we may learn thus to Prophecie. But this is not a mediate, but an immediate Gift, either by Dreams, Visions, or Oracles.

And

And thirdly, For *Tyrannus* his School, mentioned in the forecited *Acts* 19. nothing is there declared concerning what he taught, nor whom he taught, but most probable it was not Gospel-knowledge; and infallible it is, it was not how men might be qualified for Preaching; for this was not permitted or allowed any open Schools in that place at that day, as appears by the contradiction *Paul* there met withal; and how needless had it been to a learned *Hebrew* or *Greek*, since that was their Mother-Tongue, many of them being *Jews* and *Greeks*, as *vers.* 10. declares; but *Tyrannus* was allowed to teach in his School, wherefore it is probable he taught nothing of this sort of Knowledge.

Object. 4. Some do Object and say, *How can a Preacher know that the Scripture is rightly translated, that knows not the Original?*

I Answer, By the same way and means that the unlearned People of the Lord come to know it; and it concerns them, and is necessary for them to know, though I say not of the same necessity. For if they be not assured that the Scriptures, as translated, are rightly translated; what shall they build their Faith on, except on their learned Leaders, and Translators honesty and ability? and this is to pin their Faith in a business of most weight and concernment, on the Priests sleeve; and this is but to believe as the Church believes, and so the blind leading the blind, they may both fall into the Ditch.

Secondly, I Answer, It is not by knowing Arts and Sciences, or Languages, Preachers or People, can come to be assured that the Scriptures are the Word

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Word of God, and rightly translated; but by the humble, sanctified, and diligent searching into, and studying of the Scriptures; 'tis by comparing things spiritually together, as the Apostle tells us, saying, *which things also we speak, not in the words which Man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual*, 1 Cor. 2. 13. I say, by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus must we, nay, may we know the Power and Spirit, Truth and Purity of the Scriptures; and it is the Godly judicious, Spiritual Christian, best knows how aptly or corruptly they are translated.

And thirdly, I Answer, Grant this were so, which I do not grant, yet this Learning and Excellency is more requisite and essential to a Translator, Examiner or Corrector of translated Copies, than to a Gospel-preacher.

But lastly, Since so many thousand Learned, as well as Godly, have sealed the Truth of the Scriptures Purity, and Divine Authority, notwithstanding all its humane Imperfections in Translation; therefore we need not now, or continually University-Learning to do that Work which is already sufficiently done to our hands.

Object. 5. Some do Object and say, How can the Scripture be interpreted in dark passages without this help?

I Answer, As a Lanthorn without a Candle will no way help to shew a man his way, though a Candle without a Lanthorn may, no more can this dark Lanthorn of humane Learning and Languages, without the Candle of the Lord, as too abundant experience hath witnessed; but that
Candle

Candle singly can and doth. Miserable Experience sheweth what Interpreters the School-men and Fathers have been; and yet are even the Fathers of well-nigh all the Individual Errors in Judgment and Practice in the European World. The Devil and the Learned may be admired for them, if for any thing; but take some Scriptures for proof of so weighty a Point, when our Lord comes to shew how Ministers and Interpreters of Scripture shall be furnished for this Work, he saith, *When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he shall shew you things to come,* John 16. 13. The like Testimony gives Paul, *But we speak the wisdom of God in a Mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the World unto our Glory, which none of the Princes of this World knew; for had they known it, they would not have Crucified the Lord of Glory,* 1 Cor. 2. 7, 8. But some may say, How came the Preachers of the Gospel in that day to this Wisdom? Not from Universities or humane Learning, but from the Grace and Spirit of God, as you have it; *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, mark it; yea, the deep things of God,* vers. 10. And this Paul proves, vers. 11. *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God; this is further witnessed unto* vers. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.

Object. 6. May some say, *How shall a Preacher be able to withstand or confute gain-sayers without learning?*

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Learning? For every one that is a Scholar, and subtil, will sophisticate, and use fallacies, and wrest the Scriptures and his Arguments from him, if he be not a Scholar.

Now Beloved, I pray you do but consider what is said in this Objection, and you have here discovered the learned Man's Excellency, it is to sophisticate and deal fallaciously with the Simple and the Truth. Beloved, take heed of them as such who have learned the skill to deceive the simple. But yet a little further to Answer this seemingly so weighty an Objection. Know God's way, or the right way for a Preacher to answer Gain-sayers, is to have the Word of God dwell richly in him in all wisdom, that out of that Library or good Treasure, he may be able to convince them of the contrary part. Thus Paul taught, injoyning Preachers to *hold fast the faithful Word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince the Gain-sayers,* Tit. 1. 9, 10. the like you have in 2 Tim. 3. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

Object. 7. Some may say, *This is to subject Preachers, and Preaching to contempt and scorn: For if Preachers need not be learned, who will not be a Preacher? Who more bold than the ignorant, or men of ignorance? And who will reverence Preaching or Preachers, if it be so easie and common a work for any man that is unlearned? Will it not be very simple, and mean Preaching, if Preachers want Breeding, Arts, Languages, and Sciences, to garnish and dress out their Preaching, with Lively and Apt Similes, Rhetorical and Elegant Words?*

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To all which I thus Answer, in the fear of the Lord.

First, It is never the more easie, but much more the harder for any to Preach, whilst we affirm no humane Acquirements, but supernatural Attainments, that fits or qualifies Persons for Preaching.

Secondly, If all, or any seek, or undertake to Preach, it follows not that all shall or can Preach: No, there are many Learned, yea, and unlearned Intruders upon Preaching, which do not, nor can Preach; for all they rush or run upon the work; for it is written, *A man can receive nothing, that is no such Gift, except it be given him from Above*, John 3. 27. And saith Paul, *How can one Preach except he be sent?*

And thirdly, Though this unnecessary Tool be laid aside, yet are there many other helps, which every Preacher must have, both Natural and Divine, which every man hath not, no nor every Godly Man, nor can attain to; therefore to be an Accomplished-Preacher is not so easie, though it matters not how easie.

But fourthly, If it be said, *Who then will reverence Preaching or Preachers?*

I Answer, Though an undue reverence is not to be sought or desired, and every able Preacher is truly and most eminently worthy of reverence; yet when the Love of God, and the Work of God lies warm upon the Preachers heart; then the main business of a Gospel-Preacher will be to get Christ, not himself, revered: *For we Preach not our selves, but the Lord Jesus, and our selves your Servants for Christ's sake*, 2 Cor. 4. 5. And
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let me tell you, as *David* said to *Michael*, 2 Sam. 6. Even of the Hand-maids shall such be had into honour, whilst the proud Locusts of the bottomless Pit despise them. I say, Every such Soul that is Preached to, will reverence that lip which hath spoken Christ to his heart, as hereafter may more appear; but if the blind cannot, yet the seeing eye will reverence such Preaching, and that the more, because it is plain and simple.

But lastly, Whereas they tell us that Preaching will be very mean and simple if the Preachers be unlearned, and want Arts, Sciences, Rhetorick, and Logick, to help them to apt Expressions, Similies, to set forth Heavenly things by. I Answer, No, if men be wise that Preach, it will not be simple Preaching. If Preachers be dayes-men, or men of experience in Christ's Gospel, and Satan's Wiles; for if the Spirit of God can help the unlearned to words sufficient to speak to God in Prayer; surely he is much more able to help the unlearned Preacher to sufficiency of words, to speak to the Satisfaction and Advantage of unlearned, simple, sinful, earthly, ignorant Men and Women, yea, Babes and Sucklings; therefore no need to serve an Apprentiship for Words at the Schools. Thus I have Answered this Objection.

Object. 8. Some may say, *If Preachers be not Scholars and Artists, there are many things in the Scripture which they cannot resolve or explain, as the weights of the Sanctuary of old, and Places and Countries, as where they lie, and in what Continent, Scituation, Latitude and Distance one from another, &c.*

To which I Answer, This is but superfluous or unnecessary Knowledge, which every Gospel-Preacher may honourably be without. And if a Preacher cannot attain it without humane Learning, he may Preach as truly and as profitably Christ's Myserie and Man's Duty from such Scriptures, as if he could resolve such Riddles, or unnecessary Questions. For could not *Ezekiel*, *Amos*, and the Prophets prophesie against *Egypt*, *Tyrus*, *Moab*, *Babylon*, and the rest of the Heathen-Countries, as well as if they knew their Longitude or Latitude? Yes doubtless, as clearly as other-ways, for that did not concern them, but only to denounce the Judgments of God against them; other knowledge of Places is onely or mostly necessary for such as are Travellers or Historiographers, who else may misse their way, or mar their Work; but 'tis not so with a Preacher, 'tis enough for such to Preach that *Babylon* shall fall, because she hath sinned, and that *Nineveh* repented, and therefore was spared; wheresoever the one or the other Country is, and that whatsoever Countrey or People soever they be that sin against the most High, and do not repent, shall also perish first or last; yea, even *England*, though we know where it lies, without repentance, must doubtless perish.

Object. 9. May not some say to me, *Doth not Solomon the Wise, even the Preacher in my Text say, Prov. 1. 22. It is fools only that hate or slight Knowledge; so it is only unlearned, ignorant, merchanticks, that speak thus slightly and contemptibly of Learning and Knowledge? Is not every thing beautiful in its season.*

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I Answer, It is not to hate Knowledge, to cry up the Spirit's Teaching, and the Scriptures Wisdom, the best of Learning; and to cry down this empty, dangerous, smoaky, humane Learning; I say, 'tis not slighting or despising Learning, to distinguish and difference it from Spiritual and Heavenly Knowledge; to teach, that humane Learning, such as the difference is about, is not necessary or helpful for Preaching, doth neither deny or imply that Learning is useful or less than a Gift of God, and useful as other natural Gifts and Excellencies are. Is that Plant good for nothing which is not good for food, or delightful to smell on? Oh no, for it may be good and profitable for Physick: Even so is Learning, even this Learning in Controversie, to teach men Civil and Political Government, or fit men for Magistracy, but dangerous for Gospel-Preachers; good for Physicians, Lawyers, Historians, Navigators, Surveyors of Land, and the like, but needless for Preaching; good for Travellers, Merchants, Souldiers, and the like, but not for Home-dwellers or Churchmen; doubtless there are many lawful and laudable uses for humane Learning, though this be spared; therefore I hope none will say I despise it, though I affirm it ought not to be enjoined or imposed as essentially necessary for Gospel-Preaching.

And thus I have endeavoured to Answer all such Objections as I have met with, that are brought against that which hath been offered; to wit, that humane, natural, or artificial Wisdom or Learning is not the Gospel-Preachers Wisdom mentioned in the Text, or that which will fit a man to be a Gospel-

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Gospel-Preacher, or qualifie unto Wise and Gospel-preaching in the Negative.

Let me in the Affirmative now declare what this Wisdom is which every Gospel-Preacher ought to have, and cannot be competently qualified unto Preaching without it ; it is the saving, sanctifying Grace of God, and Spiritual Gifts, and assistance of the Spirit of God : This Divine Wisdom is Essential Wisdom for a Preacher ; and having this Wisdom, though without other Wisdom, a Preacher may be sufficiently accomplished unto Preaching.

For the better clearing of this, I shall more particularly open, wherein Preaching-Wisdom lies in three things.

First, That the Preacher be enriched with the Wisdom of Grace, or *the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of Wisdom, and a good understanding have all they that do thereafter*, Prov. 1. 7. Psal. 119. 10. To be spiritually Wise, is to be *seasoned with Salt of Grace*, to be instated in Covenant with the Lord Jesus, *who of God is made unto us Wisdom as well as Righteousness*, 1 Cor. 1. 30, 31. Though every gracious Person is not a Preacher, yet he, who-ever he be, that undertakes to Preach, cannot be wise enough to be Christ's Preacher, that is not Holy, and Sanctified in Jesus Christ ; this the Lord seems to prove to *Jeremiah 1. 5. Before I formed thee in the Belly, I knew thee, and before thou camest out of the Womb, I sanctified thee, and ordained thee a Prophet unto the Nations.* Mark, God layes the Foundation of Prophecy or Preaching, in electing Love, and sanctifying of the Heart ; not education of Learning,

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ing, or excellency in Brain. Thus the Lord Jesus dealt with *Paul* to qualifie him for Preaching. *Gal. 1. 15, 16. It pleased God, who separated me from my Mothers Womb, and called me by his Grace to reveal his Son in me, that I might Preach him among the Heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh or blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem, to them which were Apostles before me, &c.* So *2 Tim. 1. 5, 6. with chap. 3. 14, 15.*

But secondly, Preaching-Wisdom, or the Gospel-preaching-Wisdom, consists in having much and plentiful experience of the way of God's dealing with poor Souls, when he delivers them out of sin, and brings them into a state of Grace. Every wise Preacher, or skilful Work-man, that needeth not be ashamed, ought to have clear and plentiful acquaintance with Satans Wiles, Temptations, and Delusions, and with all the Concernments of a poor sinning, sinking, sorrowing Soul, and therefore ought not to be a Novice in the dealings or outgoings of God with poor Creatures. He is to Preach from Experience, not for Experience, as Merchants that travel to the *Indies*, or the Antichristian Priests of the World do. A Gospel-Preacher, should be able to say, as *John* saith in his first Epistle, *Chap. 1. vers. 1. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life, that declare we unto you, &c.* So saith *Paul*, *We are not ignorant of his wiles and devices, 2 Cor. 2. 11.* He that Preacheth without or beyond Experience, is like a man that tells one his way to a Place or Countrey he never saw, he must do it very

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rawly and uncertainly : Even so it is in this case ; He that is to guide others in their way to Heaven, ought to have gone it before himself, or else he will prove an uncertain Guide to others.

Thirdly, and lastly, Every Gospel-Preacher's Wisdom, should lie in having rich and plentiful acquaintance with the Scripture ; not only, or so much in the Letter, as in the Sence, Scope, Doctrine, and real Interpretation of the Word : And if these things be in a Preacher, and abound with continual Prayer, and uninterrupted fellowship of the Spirit of Grace, *he shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus,* 2 Pet. 1. 8.

And thus having proved and opened this Doctrine, to wit, *That every Gospel-Preacher ought to be wise*, that is, spiritually Wise ; I shall proceed to make some Application of the Point.

The first Use is of Information.

First, Let it be a word of Instruction or Information ; first, To shew us how unwise such Preachers are, and how unfit to be Preachers unto others, who are so unwise, as to oppose and deny this Doctrine, That Grace, and Spiritual Gifts, or Wisdom, is sufficient and essential to a Preacher. Nothing shames, and truly cloudes the honour and reputation of persons pretending to worth and judgment, more than to be ignorant or deceived in or about their own Callings or Employments. For a Philosopher to mistake in the Nature of Philosophy, or a General of an Army to be ignorant of the very Theory or Discipline of War ; Is it not a

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great shame? It is no less shameful for the Tribe of *Levi*, the Princes and Fathers of the Church, the Popes and Prelates of our day, to be such mistaken deceived Doves, as to be ignorant, and madly confident in bewraying their Egyptian blindness, concerning their professed Art and Trade, Preaching, and the right qualifications of Preachers, although they get all their great Wealth by Preaching, or Appendixes thereunto; as Universities, Courts, Pulpits, and learned Volumes, to assert this blind and Anti-scriptural Conclusion, that Humane-Breeding, University-Learning, Languages and Sciences, are essential Qualifications, such, as without which no man can be thought to meddle with Gospel-Preaching, contrary to what hath largely been proved: May I not boldly say of these great Rabies of our Day, what the Apostle saith *Rom. 1. 22. Professing to be wise they became fools?* Surely even so hath God fooled this wise Generation, and discovered, that our World hath many grave and gay Fools: Even many more then wear motly-Coats, even most of the Professors of Divinity, as they please to flatter themselves, our Grave and Orthodox Roman Clergy.

I say, This Generation, how lofty soever their eyes are, are not washed from their filthiness, nor not of being fordidly ignorant what scripturally will qualifie sufficiently, and essentially unto Preaching-Imployment, *Prov. 30. 12, 13.* Nay, so ignorant are they of a Preacher's Qualifications, that some, and they no small men amongst that Tribe, have openly declared, That without a Miracle, it is impossible to be a sufficient Preacher

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Preach the Gospel of Christ, without having sat at the feet of *Gamaliel*, or be brought up in an University, as if it were not possible with God, even without any Miracle, to kill *Goliath* by the hand of little *David*, when the Sons of *Mars* stand by and can do nothing: Even so this Clergy would perswade us, God's little *David's*, Spiritual and Experienced Christians, cannot Preach, except armed with an University-burthen upon their backs. Though God hath most abundantly, by innumerable Instances, disproved this Fallacy, yet once more let me rebuke the madness, and make manifest the folly of these Prophets, even those learned, but ignorant false-Prophets, who assert: That Humane Learning only can qualifie unto this end; Yea, that it alone, without saving-Grace, and the Fellowship of the Spirit of God, can make sufficient Ministers to go forth and Preach the Gospel to Children of Men, especially if a Bishop do but Ordain them, and say, *Receive the Holy Ghost*, as plentiful experience witnesseth, and their Canons and Book of Ordination of Priests and Deacons declareth, where the Scripture-Qualifications are left out, and others set up.

Well, to conclude this Use, let these Prophets, that fill the World with Priests and Preachers of *Jeroboam*, the Son of *Nebat's* Order, of whom we read 1 Kings 12. 31. *And he made Priests of the lowest and basest of the People, which were not of the Sons of Levi.* But let these hear what the Lord saith to them that have apostatised from the right way; These mad Prophets, these *Wells without water*, these *Clouds carried with a tempest*, 2 Pet. 2. 15, 16, 17. *Even thus saith the Lord God,*

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We unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing, Ezek. 13. 3.

The second Use is for Reproof.

Secondly, This might reprove the darkness and delusion that is crept into, and seized on too many godly, sober, well-meaning Christians and Professors, that have dwelt so long in *Egypt*; they can swear by the Life of *Pharaoh*, that is, have traded too long with Antichrist's Clergy; men that now they dare even swear to the truth of it, that no man but a Scholar of that sort they intend, either can or ought to meddle with Preaching, saying, *Let every one keep in his own Calling, and not go beyond his last*; forgetting that the Lord hath said, *Ye may all Prophesie one by one*, 1 Cor. 14. 31. And that by the alone study of the Scriptures *The Man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good Word and Work*, 2 Tim. 3. 17. Oh let me beseech you, Have not mens Persons and Parties so in admiration, as to plead for *Baal*, and call Good, Evil; and Evil, Good, speaking evil of things you know not; but search the Scripture diligently and humbly, and you will find other qualifications, appointed as necessary and sufficient for Preaching without that, I have so opposed; unless the smoke of the Bottomless-Pit hath put out your eyes, Rev. 9. Oh my Brethren! all you that fear the Lord, be more Scripturally-wise and Learned your selves, and then you will easily and plainly see the vanity, ignorance and emptiness of your supposed Orthodox Teachers; but I shall spare you, as being rather led than Leaders of your selves,

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selves, seeing in this Point with other mens eyes. All I shall further do for you, is to pray for you, as sometime *Elisha* prayed for his Servants, saying, Lord, I pray thee open his eyes, that he may see, and the Lord opened his eyes, and he saw the Mountains full of Horses and Chariots of fire round about *Elisha*, 2 Kings 6. 17. Even so say I, for all the Saints, who are contrary minded to this Gospel-Truth; Lord open the eyes of thy dear Children, my dissenting Brethren to see by thy Light, even the Light of Scripture, that Grace-saving, Sanctifying-Grace, and the Gifts and fellowship of the Spirit, without Humane or University Preparations, are truly, fully, most abundantly sufficient to make Christ's Gospel-Preachers wise enough for Soul-conversion, and the edification of the Body in love. And thus much for the second Use, I now come to a Third.

The third Use is of Information.

Thirdly, Thus may I inform, whence the Romish and Learned Clergy-men of our day, do so blaspheme and oppose the Spirits-Teaching; 'tis surely because of their ignorance and sinful interest. This was the reason why *Zedechiah*, Son of *Chenanaan*, went near and smote *Micaiah* on the cheek, 1 Kings 22. 24. This also was the cause why *Sanbalat* and *Tobiah*, and their Companions, did so reproach good *Nehemiah*, and obstruct the Work of the Temple, *Nehem.* 2. 19. with chap. 6. 1, 2. And the same reason there was, why the Priests and Captains of the Temple, and the Sadducees came and opposed and persecuted the Apo-

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files, *Acts* 4. 1, 2. And even at this very day the same reason is, why the Priests and Prelates of our day do so exclaim and reproach the Spiritual-teaching, and the Spiritual-Ministers teaching. It is their own interest of profit, and ignorance of Truth, and right way of fitting men for Preaching: though they are ignorant of God's Will in this thing, yet are they well acquainted, that in this kind of Truth, and these sort of Preachers, go up, their Trade, Honour, and Profits will soon go down; according to that saying, *The Fruits which thy Soul lusteth after, are departed from thee, and all things which are dainty and goodly, are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all*, *Rev.* 18. 14. And this is the reason why these covetous Clergy-men do so cry out against this way of Preaching by men spiritually wise, but otherwise illiterate and unlearned, because such Preachers, if allowed, will soon cloud their Glory, and eclips their Credit, and humble their Pride, and hinder their Markers; and who then can wonder that these so reproach the true Gospel-Preachers; they must blaspheme and gnaw their tongues for pain; therefore it is not to be wondred at, as long as this Antichristian-Priesthood endureth, as we have it *Rev.* 11. 10. There can be no joy to them that dwell thus in, or upon earthly Things, Orders, Riches, Credit, and Authority: You may as well look for Peace from Hell, as from the Learned Romish-Priesthood, *Rev.* 12. 17. Therefore cease marvelling, that the Pope's Clergy do so vilifie and reproach Christ's Gospel Spiritually-wise Preachers, stiling them, proud, busie-bodies in other mens business, self-will'd, presumptuous, ignorant,

vorant, factious, enemies to *Cesar*, and what not? that may render them odious, dealing with Christ's Ministers, and faithful Preachers, as formerly their fore-Fathers dealt with that faithful Witness and Martyr of the Lord Jesus *John Hus*; who when they burned him, clad him in strange Garments, painting Images of Devils upon him to make him odious to the People; as you have it recorded in the Book of *Martyrs*.

But to close this Use, Let all Christ's faithful Servants and Preachers, remember what the Lord Christ saith, *Mat. 5. 11, 12. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake: Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.* And if men of this breeding do scoff and deride you for this Preaching; say as *David*, *If I be vile, I will be yet more vile, &c.*

The next Use I shall make of this Point, shall be for Caution or Counsel.

The first Use is of Caution.

First, To all the Churches of Jesus Christ to consider, That if every Gospel-Preacher ought to be wise, and none may Preach but such who are Spiritual-wise, then take heed in your choice, and calling of men to Preach, that you observe this Rule, to Elect, Ordain, and Appoint to the Work of Preaching such; have eye to this Rule. And as *Moses* said to *Israel*, let me now say to you the Churches of the Saints; Look you out wise and
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Spiritually understanding men, and appoint them to the Work of Preaching. Intrust no Spiritual Fools with so weighty and honourable a Work, remembring God hath no pleasure in Fools, *Eccles.* 5.4. Fools, or unwise-Preachers, will Preach but foolishly, and his people can have little Soul-advantage, or few sinners be converted, or the Lord Jesus little glory from, or by, such Preachers; Preaching is too weighty and difficult a Work for ignorant, unwise, Carnal, ungifted persons to accomplish; therefore take the Counsel given *Acts* 6. 3. Wherefore Brethren, look out men for this Work, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, and them only appoint unto this business; dishonour not Preaching, by sending dishonourable Preachers about Preaching Employment; and mistake not the Rule by which you should judge who is wise and fit to make a Preacher: Judge not according to appearance, or man's judgment, but remember what God said to *Samuel* in the like case; *Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart,* 1 Sam. 16. 7. Beloved, in this business of judging who is fit to be admitted and allowed to Preach, consult not with flesh and blood, with the carnal, wise, and learned Rabies of the day, lest like *Samuel*, you be mistaken in your judgment, and call him *God's Anointed*, when the Lord saith, *This is not the man*; but consult the Record and Charter of the New Testament, and see whom that Word calls Wise, and a man fit to Preach the Gospel; and as hath been demonstrated, you shall find
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the Wisdom which comes from Above, from the Father of Lights, is the onely Wisdom that can fit persons unto Preaching. Grace, and Gifts of the Spirit of God, are best qualifications for a Preacher, as appears *Acts* 1. 4, 5. He will make the best Preacher which hath most Grace and Gifts of the Spirit. Therefore take heed to this business, I beseech you Brethren, who are Christ's Porters, see that no foolish, idle, or unholy Shepherds enter in at Christ's Doors, or be his Peoples Pastors; for if there do, the sin and guilt, yea, and punishment also of such Preaching, will lie at your doors, *John* 10. 3.

Object. But me-thinks I hear some Object and say, *This is preposterous, erroneous, and dangerous, to make Preachers to depend and spring from the Congregations Approbation and Mission; This were to make Ministers or Preachers depend upon the People; whereas, is it not better for Congregations to spring from, and depend upon the Ministry, or the Preachers and Dispensers of the Word?*

I Answer, This Objection smells strong of *Rome*, who-ever be the Objectors, and is calculated for the Interest of the Clergy, to maintain their Pride, Authority, and Avarice, and therefore may the rather be suspected to be Anti-scriptural, or of no great strength to withstand.

Therefore first, Though these suggest this to be preposterous, as if we would put the Cart to draw the Horses, and not the Horses to draw the Cart: My Answer is, Natural and Divine Reason would judge the contrary; were it not preposterous that Servants should judge and chuse their Masters; but Masters that are to have their service, and provide

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vide them their maintenance, should be judged unmeet to question or judge their ability. Is not the House-holder more honourable than his Household-Servants, and the House before the Household-Servants? Even so in the Church of Christ; Must Preachers and Ministers be the Churches, as well as Christ's Servants; and shall not the Church be concluded honourable and wise enough to judge of the ability of her own Servants? Only they must judge whether the Church or Congregation is fit for their Profit or Honour. God forbid: Must the Church maintain them, yet not call them to their work, and be allowed to judge of them? Yea, the Church must try their Ministers, and yet shall they not be equal or superior to them, proved *1 John 4. 1.*

Secondly, This is not erroneous, but most constant, and agreeable to Scripture, and then it matters not what it is contrary to, or who calls it Error. But that this is agreeable to Scripture, take *Acts* the first into consideration, where *Peter* standing up in the midst of one hundred and twenty Disciples, says; *Of these men that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, must one be chosen, or ordained, to be a witness with us of his Resurrection;* and they meaning the hundred and twenty, not the eleven; appointed two, *Josephus called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Mitchias, vers. 15, 21, 22, 23.* with *chap. 18.* from 24 to 28. Truth it is, this way of trying and sending forth, and judging of the Preacher's Gifts, and fitness for Gospel-Preaching, is an erring from the Canon of the *Romish-Church*, and their Book of Ordination of Priests and Deacons;

cons; but is no erring from the Canon of the New Testament, as hath been cleared. And,

Thirdly, Whereas they say this Doctrine is dangerous; give me leave to say thereto, Truth is not endangered by tryal, or good commodity by being searched into. The wiser, and more Spiritual Preachers are, the less danger of their corrupting the Scriptures, or ensnaring the people. If the Objectors intend the danger lies in this, *That the ignorant People or Multitude of Believers being intrusted with this business, will chuse simple and unwise Preachers.*

I Answer briefly, Their Rule in this business, prevents this Objection; For they must be wise that ought to be admitted to Preach; and the Church must not only be simple and ignorant, but undutiful and disobedient to Christ's commands, or else this danger is avoided. And though *Babylons* Builders are blind in this matter, yet Christ's Church is wise, and seeing, and the Spiritual Man discerneth all things, *1 Cor. 2. 15. 2 Thess. 2. 15.* And so much for this Objection.

The second Use is of Caution.

Secondly, Let this Use be a word of Caution to all such as either design, or are already engaged in Preaching-work. Look to this Doctrine, That you are in God's, as well as his Peoples account, wise, truly wise, richly wise, with the Spiritual, Heavenly, Gospel-wisdom. Oh Beloved! undertake not this weighty, glorious, honourable Work, or employment of Preaching, without futable aptness and fitness thereunto. Run not before Jesus Christ sends you, remembering *Rom. 10.*

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15. *How can they Preach except they be sent?* Take not this honour, this undue honour to yourselves to be judges of your sufficiency. For it is written *Heb. 5. 14. No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* Be of the temper and spirit of *Jeremiah*, have low thoughts of your selves and abilities, and uprightly say as he did, *Ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a Child,* *Jer. 1. 6.* And with *Moses* say, *Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken to thy Servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue,* *Exod. 4.* Oh you Beloved, to whom I am now speaking in this Use, be mindful of that word, *Eccles. 5. 2. Be not rash with thy Mouth, and let not thy Heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in Heaven, therefore let thy words be few.* 'Tis Soul-work you are to do, therefore be wise; 'tis Christ's Work, therefore be wise; 'tis honourable Work, therefore be wise; 'tis hard Work, very difficult Work, therefore be wise: For who is sufficient for these things? 'tis dangerous Work, yea, most dangerous of all Work: If we do this deceitfully, or negligently, or foolishly, think on that word *Eccles. 5. 6. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, neither say thou, it was an error: Wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands?* Oh remember *Ezek. 3. 17, 18. If thou warn not the wicked from his wicked way, the same wicked man shall surely die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand.* Be therefore wise, truly wise, Heavenly wise, spiritually wise, richly wise, in all the revealed wisdom of God; for God hath said,

said, He will be sanctified in them that draw nigh him, and before all the people he will be glorified, *Numb. 10. 3.*

But that you may be wise, take these few Directions and helps, as sufficient for the attainment of Preachers-wisdom.

Direct. 1. First, and above all, Be much in Communion with God by Prayer for wisdom, for *every good and perfect Gift, cometh down from the Father of Lights;* and your way to have it, is by Prayer: So saith *James, If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not, chap. 1. 5.* Beloved, all we that Preach, and all ye that desire this great Work of Preaching, we do all of us lack wisdom, yea, very much lack wisdom; therefore pray, Oh pray, abundantly for wisdom, that we may receive it: Thus did *Solomon*, and pleased God, and obtained his request, *1 Kings 3. 7, 8, 9.* And this, *Paul* the great Apostle of the Gentiles, desired the *Thessalonian-Church* do do for him; even to pray, that the Word of the Lord might have free course, and be glorified by him and his Companions. Oh Brethren, and Beloved, pray much and fervently for your selves, and beg also the constant fervent Prayers of all the Saints, and Churches of the Saints, that you, and all that labour in the Word and Doctrine, may be truly, richly, Spiritually wise.

Direct. 2. Secondly, Would you be Spiritually wise? Be diligent, painful, and abundant in the study and searching into the Scriptures, for this is able, onely able, of outward helps, to make the Man of God wise, even throughly wise, unto Salvation,

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vation, 2 Tim. 3. 15. with 1 Tim. 4. 15, 16. *Meditate on these things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all; continue in them, that thou mayest save thy self, and them that hear.* Oh my dear Brethren and Friends! this is a Preachers study and work, to search and study the Scriptures; not Fathers, Commentators, or School-men, as his business, this is but a by-study; it is Scripture-study, even the Old and New Testament, which is our great business, even our all to study, for 'tis Scripture and Gospel that you must Preach, not Books, nor mens Opinions; therefore study the Scripture diligently and humbly.

Direct. 3. Thirdly, Be very much in the practice of Godliness; walk much with God if you would be wise, and know much of the mind of God. Thus God acted towards *Abraham*, Gen. 18. 17. He would not hide his Counsel from him, because he was Godly, and would command and reach his Family the fear of the Lord; so in *David's* case. So our Lord also promiset, *John 7. 17.* saying, *If any man will do his Will, he shall know the Doctrine whether it be of God.*

Direct. 4. Fourthly, Be much in Communion with Saints: for with the well-advised is wisdom, therefore if Preachers would be wise, they must walk in the way of good men; and keep the paths of the Righteous, *Prov. 2. 20.* *Paul* sat at the feet of *Gamaliel*, and thus *Apollos* became wise through converse with *Aquila* and *Priscilla*; and thus *Mary* may be said to become wise, by sitting at the feet of our Lord *Jesus*, *Acts 22. 3.* with chap. 18. 25, 26. and *Luke 10. 25.* So that if a Preacher desire

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desire to be wise, his way is to hold and maintain much Christian-fellowship and Communion with the Saints, even with the wisest and most experienced among them. This may serve for direction in this matter; therefore I beseech you that are Gospel-Preachers, to strive to be wise by the exercise of all holy Means; for by so doing, you may obtain to be such Preachers, of whom it may be said, *Moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the People knowledge.*

And this shall suffice for the first Branch of this Verse, concerning what the Preacher was, and his qualification; I come now to the second Branch of the Text, which contains the first part of the wise Preachers Act or Work, *He still taught the People knowledge.*

First, These words contain either the Preacher's persistency, or going on with his Work: Or,

Secondly, His proficiency, or ripening at, or in his Work; *He still taught the people knowledge.* Not as one that was at a stand, or height, but as one that grew and proceeded higher and higher in the measures of his Divine Attainments; *He still taught the people higher knowledge,* or more profound Mysteries; and this the after-words seem to declare.

I shall first take this word *still*, as it gives forth the Preacher's fixation, duration, and continuation at his Work: He did not tire, or was weary of his Employment, but he *still* went on teaching the People. Whence,

Doct. 5. Take this Doctrine or Conclusion; That every wise Preacher ought to persist, and continue,

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task, or go on with his Work of Preaching to the People: He still taught the people knowledge.

This is that frame of Spirit the Lord seems to in-
joy and expect at the hands of his Servants, as the
passage seems to imply, *Cursed be the man that
doth the Work of the Lord deceitfully, or as the
Margin hath it, negligently, Jer. 4. 8, 10.* the like
we have chap. 17. 16. where *Jeremiah* tells the
Lord, *I have not hastened from being a Pastor to for-
sake thee:* Thus *Jesus Christ* practised, *Luk. 8.*
*He went, saith the Text, throughout every City and
Village, Preaching and shewing the glad-tydings of
the Kingdom of God:* And this you have from the
Lord, given forth *Luk. 9. 60.* where *Jesus* saith,
*No man having put his hand to the Plow, and look-
ing back, is fit for the Kingdom of God.* The
likewise was *Paul's* practice, as he tells the Church
of *Ephesus*; *Therefore watch and remember, that for
the space of three years, he ceased not to warn every
one of them, night and day, with tears, Acts 20.*
31. To name but one place more, for the proof
of the Doctrine, that every wise, holy, Gospel-
Preacher, once called to that Work, ought to perse-
vere and continue diligent therein, as you have
it, *He still taught the people knowledge.* The other
passage I shall quore, is in *1 Tim. 4. 13, 14, 15,*
16. where *Paul* directs *Timothy*, saying, *Till I
come, give attendance to Reading, to Exhortation,
to Doctrine: Neglect not the Gift that is in thee,
which was given thee by Prophecy, with the laying
on of the hands of the Presbytery. Meditate on these
things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy pro-
fit may appear to all. Take heed unto thy self,
and unto the Doctrine; continue in them; for in doing so,*

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ing this, thou shalt both save thy self, and them that hear thee.

But a little further to open this, Let me give you some Reasons or Arguments to clear this to be a Truth, That every Preacher ought diligently to persist in Preaching.

Reas. 1. First, Because if the Preacher's opportunity be continued, his diligence and painfulness in Preaching ought also to be continued; for not only Gifts and Grace are Talents to be faithfully and diligently improved, but Time also is a Talent to be improved, and that as conscionably and diligently by Preachers, as by any men. That Time and Opportunities are to be husbanded and improved, take Christ's own words upon this very occasion; when his Disciples would have perswaded him to have desisted from Preaching for fear of the Jews; a plausible Argument to avoid persecution; but mark Christ's Answer, *Are there not twelve hours in the day?* John 13. 9. Day-time is given us for day-work and walks, not to idle and loyter in. This the Ruler of the Synagogue well understood, though misapplyed, when he said to the people, *There are six dayes in the which men ought to work,* Luke 13. 14. Therefore, if Jesus Christ allow a Preacher life-time, health and opportunity, he ought to trade with that Talent, and improve that Opportunity, as the Apostle Paul witnesseth, saying, *As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all,* Gal. 6. 10.

Reas. 2. Secondly, Preachers should still persist and persevere in Preaching and Teaching the People Knowledge, because the people still need knowledge: and it is the peoples ignorance that

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calls for Preaching; therefore while the people are short and wanting in knowledge, the wise Preacher must not be short or wanting in Preaching, but *still* teach the people knowledge. This our Lord declares, he eyed in giving of Preaching-ministrations to the Church, even the supply of the Churches need, that the need of the Church should be removed, by being supplied, as you find *Ephes. 4.* from 11, to 16. where the Apostle tells us, That the Lord Jesus, when he gave *Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers*, he gave them to the Church, and Gifts to them for the perfecting of the Saints. Note, It was not only to convert and beget Saints, but to perfect the state and grace of such as were through Preaching savingly begotten; and *vers. 13.* the Apostle tells us again, That Preaching-Ministers are given to lay out themselves, until the Saints come to a perfect measure, and stature, in Faith and Knowledge, even beyond danger of being *like Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine*. Now if these be the ends of Preachers, given and gifted by Jesus Christ; then until the Saints be come to this stature, and full measure, in the Grace and Knowledge of Jesus Christ, every wise Preacher ought to continue *still* to teach the people knowledge.

Reas. 3. Thirdly, Every wise and Gospel-Preacher, ought to persevere and go on in teaching of the people; because, that which he hath to Preach or Declare to the People from the Lord, is not soon Preached or Declared; therefore he had great need to attend diligently and continually upon this thing; even *still* to teach the people knowledge:

ledge: For as their Ignorance is not soon removed, so is not the whole Truth of God soon preached. It will be long, yea, very long, e're the wisest of Preachers can either know or declare the whole Counsel of God to his People. Now the whole Counsel of God is to be declared, as appears *Acts* 20. 26, 27, 28. The Commands of the Lord are exceeding broad, and the Truths of the Gospel very many. 'Tis not a little time spent in Preaching will serve to reveal them; Preachers may begin to Preach as young as *Timothy*, and die as old as *Paul* the Aged, and yet be behind-hand in this Work; and therefore had need doubtless to be Preaching in season and out of season; yea, to be instant in Preaching, that is, without unnecessary intermission, *2 Tim.* 4. 2.

This is the third Argument why every wise Gospel-Preacher should still teach the People knowledge.

Reas. 4. And lastly, Those whose work is to Preach to others, ought not to be idle or negligent in the work of their Callings; such ought not to be idle or negligent, working in their own Callings. But every wise Preacher hath this for his Work among other things, to teach the people of God, not only to remember, to keep holy the Sabbath day; but also to remember, that six days they labour and do all that they have to do, *Exod.* 20. Therefore every wise and honest Preacher, ought to remember himself; Six dayes shalt thou labour, and not do this Work of the Lord deceitfully: but as *Paul* teacheth *Timothy*, when he saith, *But watch thou in all things, endure affliction, do the work of an Evangelist, make full proof of thy Ministry,*

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2 Tim. 4. 5. Wherefore what a sin and a shame is it for a Preacher to say to the people; Be not idle or slothful in business, and yet he himself be idle in Preaching? Such had need to read and consider that place *Rom. 2.* from 17 to 24. And therefore I conclude, Every wise Preacher ought diligently and continually to Preach, as did the Preacher mentioned in the Text; *He still taught the People knowledge.*

Application; Now by way of Application: This serves for a full word of Reproof to all idle, lazy, negligent Preachers of the Word of God, by whatever Name or Title dignified or distinguished, who-ever they are, or where-ever they be, let this Doctrine reprove them; for if every wise Preacher ought still to teach the people knowledge, and to persevere and persist in the Work of Preaching, this looks wisely, and reproveth loudly, all such Preachers or Idlers, that stand in the place or room of Preachers, and Preach not diligently, frequently, and continually. The Lord complaineth of these, or such like, in *Ezek. 13. 4, 5* *O Israel, thy Prophets are like the Foxes in the Deserts: They have not gone up into the Gaps, neither made up the Hedge for the House of Israel, to stand in the battel in the day of the Lord.*

How many such Foxes or Prophets are there in England at this day, which have not gone up as they ought to do in the Gaps, to stop God's Wrath from breaking forth upon poor sinners, or to help sinful Souls to know how to stand guileless and secure in the day of the Lord's fierce anger? Have we not too many Preachers, that account Preaching a by-work, and accordingly Preach seldom,

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even when they please, as well as how they please ? If so they be but Preachers, and Preach at all, though never, or not at all, but when constraint, or covetousness constrains or induces them, they will, it may be, Preach as much as Law, not Gospel, requireth, or as much as their profit provokes or calls them to, but no more. These are none of the wise Preachers in my Text spoken of, that *still* teach the people knowledge ; no, these are such of the foolish preachers or prophets, mentioned in the fore-cited *Ezek. 13. 3.* Let these idle, lazy, sleepy Drones, not wise Preachers, though pretenders thereunto, hear the reproof which the Lord gives them, *Isa. 56. His Watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, and cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber : Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough ; they are Shepherds that cannot understand, they all look to their own way, everyone for his gain from his quarter. Come ye, say they, we will fetch Wine, and we will fill our selves with strong drink, and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant,* vers. 10, 11, 12.

How like to these Watchmen of *Israel* are too many Watchmen or Preachers in *England*, Lordly Preachers, and Learned Preachers, Cathedral Preachers, and Popish Preachers, is but too well known to as many as know any thing of the state of *England*.

We may say of *England* this day, as was said of *Israel*, *Hos. 7. 6. Their Baker sleepeth all night ;* and the height of this sin lies in this, That *England's* Preachers, not onely do not, and cannot Preach, but also teach and maintain, That they

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ought not, or need not Preach often, or frequently, Lording, and Reading of Forms of Prayers is more their business than Preaching, or most to be minded. Nay, have they not gone higher than most scandalously and unconscionably to omit, and neglect this blessed Work of Preaching, but also to make their sin out of measure sinful, they forbid, and command such as both can Preach and would Preach, that they should not Preach, or so much and so often Preach as they ought to do? such enemies to the Gospel-preaching and prosperity, may read their doom and name, in *Mat. 23. 13.* But, *wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men; for ye neither go in your selves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.* Oh think of this ye Preaching-men that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you, *Psal. 50. last.* Let me tell you, non-Preaching Preachers, as your sin is out of measure sinful, so will one day your condition be out of measure woful; as *Paul* saith, *Necessity is laid upon me, and wo unto me if I Preach not the Gospel.* Not to Preach, when engaged, called, and enabled to Preach, will make wo enough for such Preachers as feed not the Flock, but themselves, as you have it *Ezek. 34. 28.* *Son of man, prophesie against the Shepherds of Israel; prophesie, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord unto the Shepherds; Wo be unto the Shepherds of Israel, that do feed them; should not the Shepherd feed the Flock?* But now, idle, non-Preaching Preachers or Shepherds, hear your doom at large; *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against the Shepherds, and I will require my Flock*

at their band, and cause them to cease from feeding the Flock; neither shall the Shepherds feed themselves any more, for I will deliver my Flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them: And therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold I, even I will judge between the fat Cattel and the lean Cattel, because ye have thrust with the side, and pushed with the shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad: Therefore will I save my Flock, and they shall be no more for a prey, and I will judge between Cattel and Cattel. Not to Preach, when enabled to Preach, is to quench the Spirit, and that's no small sin; 'Tis to be unfaithful, and hide God's Talents in the Earth; It is to starve Souls, yea, as much as in you lies, to damn Souls, by withholding the means of Salvation from them; 'Tis to multiply transgressors, and transgressions both, and under a Cloak of Sanctity; and all this committed knowingly, not ignorantly. Therefore woful will be the state of all tyred, idle, dumb Preachers, that with-hold the Truth in unrighteousness. Solomon's Proverb will be your Portion, *He that with-holdeth Corn, the people shall curse him*, Prov. 11. 26. If such as with-hold bodily Bread, or Corn, are worthy of the peoples curse, What Curse or bitter *Anathema Maranatha* must these with-holders of God's Corn, and his Peoples Souls-bread from being given forth in due season, be thought worthy of?

But to close; Know, and consider, though men should keep their Curses from you, yet God will not hold such high-handed sinners as you are guiltless, whom I have been reprovng of, as appears

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Jer. 23. Wo be unto the Pastors that destroy and scatter the Sheep of my pasture, saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, against the Pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my Flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them, behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord, vers. 1, 2. Thus much for this first Use of Reproof.

The second Use is of Exhortation.

Secondly, This may be for Exhortation to all such as are wise Preachers, and are called to the Work of Preaching. Be exhorted *still*, teach the people knowledge, go on to your and their perfection, and do not begin a good Work in the World, and in the hearts of the Children of God, and then leave it unwatched over, or unwatered, but *still* be teaching the people knowledge. I remember this is made a note of folly in the Ostrich, *That she leaveth her Eggs in the Earth, and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild Beasts may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers. Her labour is in vain, without fear, because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding, Job 39. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.* Oh! you that Preach the Gospel-Wisdom, and either are, or would be, counted wise Preachers, be exhorted not to be like the Ostrich; leave not your Eggs in the Dust, nor to a foot that will crush them, but look well to your Seed sown, and secure your Conceptions; and lose not or endanger your labours, but watch and

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and pray, that you fall not into temptations, but *still* teach the people knowledge. If you decline to teach the people knowledge, the Devil and his Brokers will still teach your people error and folly, as you have it *Mat. 13. 25. But while men slept, his enemy came, and sowed Tares among the Wheat, and went his way.*

Now will not this grieve a wise Preacher, that sincerely Preaches for the good of the people, that through his negligence, ease, and idleness, that not *still* teaching the people knowledge, the people should be all over-grown with Tares and Errors? Therefore my dear Brethren, who labour in the Word and Doctrine, *still* teach your people knowledge. The good Husband-man went to Plow last season, and will not forbear and lose this season; and the good Merchant-man ventures to Sea his Goods in one Ship and another, to one part of the World, and another in another season; so should a wise Preacher plow up the fallow-Ground this year, & the next send out his Commodity to this and the other good Port, in one and another good Ship; take Freight, send thy Winter and thy Summer-Adventures; remembering *Eccles. 11. 4, 5, 6. Ob! he that observeth the Wind, shall not sow; and he that observeth the Wind, shall not reap.* As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child; even so thou knowest not the Works of God, who maketh all. In the morning sow thy Seed, and in the evening with-hold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be of like good.

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Oh therefore be exhorted, who are wise Preachers, *still* to teach the people knowledge: And to this Work, let me give you a few Motives *still* to teach the people knowledge. For,

Motive 1. First; It will much argue and evidence your love and affection to the Lord Jesus; that you love his Flock, and feed his Lambs, *John* 21. 14. 'Tis the greatest evidence of love to Christ, and to the Lambs of Christ, to be diligently and constantly teaching and feeding the Flock of God with the Word of Knowledge. And if there be any Preacher that would have, or carry, a black and visible badge, of neither loving Christ, nor Saints, then, and not else, forbear to teach the people knowledge.

Motive 2. Secondly, Let this move Preachers, even every wise Preacher, *still* to teach the people knowledge; Because, the more you teach others, the more Jesus Christ will teach you. If you would have much of the Teachings of the Lord Jesus, be much in the teaching of them that are Christ's; *For he that watereth, shall be watered; and he that disperseth abroad, and giveth to the poor, his Righteousness remaineth for ever, Prov. 11. 25. with 2 Cor. 9. 9.* Now consider, not only the people need to be Preached unto by you, but you and I have great, even abundant need to have Jesus Christ Preach unto us; therefore *still* teach the people knowledge.

Motive 3. Thirdly, *Still* teach the people knowledge, because, 'tis most honourable to be most diligent in this Work; and honour is much taking in these dayes, when every one seeks the Rulers favour. Now this is the Preacher's way to honour,

nour, by diligent Preaching; as skill comes by diligence, so honour, and deserved reputation, comes by frequent and painful Preaching. Look how *Solomon* commends the diligent Woman, *Prov. last. vers. last.* Even so shall the diligent Preacher be commended also, *Prov. 11. 30. He that winneth Souls is wise;* with *chap. 22. 22. Seest thou a man that is diligent in his business, he shall stand before Kings, he shall not stand before mean men.* Therefore though we may not seek the honour that cometh of men, yet we may seek that which cometh of God, *John 5. 44. Oh! How beautiful are the feet of them that Preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad-tydings of good things, Rom. 10. 15.*

Motive 4. Fourthly, My dear Brethren, it will be very comfortable, in a dying hour, to have Preached diligently in the dayes of Life; And when have we so much need of comfort as in dying hours? When will sin, guilt, shame, and scorn, lie so heavy upon us, as in a dying hour? Therefore still teach the people knowledge, that God may still continue your comforts, and cause your comforts to abound in dying hours. Thus should a wise Preacher strive to Preach, that with *Samuel* he may look a dying hour, with joy, in the face, *1 Sam. 12. 2, 3, 5.* So *Paul* comforted himself in the day of his departing, because *he had finished his course, and made full proof of his Ministry, 2 Tim. 4. 5, 6, 7, 8.* therefore still teach the people knowledge: Yea, our Lord *Jesus* useth this as a means to support him under the sting of Death, by this Consideration; That he had finished the Work his Father committed him to do,
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in John 17. 4, 5. where our Lord saith, *I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the Work thou gavest me to do: And now, O Father, glorifie thou me with thy own self.* O! here is the way for a Preacher to find assured comfort in a day of Death, that he hath finished his Work in a day of Life; and *still* taught the people knowledge. O! therefore, ye that are appointed to be Lights to men in a dark World; let not, I beseech you, your Light be put under a Bushel, or at best, but shine in a dark Lanthorn; but receive this Exhortation, and let me leave it as universal advice, for every Preacher that hath ears to hear what the Spirit saith, to hear and receive, even *still* to teach the people knowledge, Rev. 6. 7. So much for this fifth Doctrine.

I should come now to a second particular, offered from this first Act of the wise Preacher, That *he still taught the people knowledge*; that is, He went forward, and made progression in Preaching; He did not stick or remain upon first Principles, but rose higher and higher in his Preaching, he *still* taught the people knowledge; that is, higher measures and degrees of knowledge: As he was wisely diligent, so was he wisely proceeding and going forward, from step to step, in the degrees and measures of his Knowledge and Preaching. The Point of Doctrine hence is;

Doct. *That wise Preachers are prospering or thriving Preachers.*

They are not only diligent and constant Preachers, but also they are growing Preachers; he *still* taught the people knowledge, that is, more and higher knowledge. This was shadowed out in
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the Waters of the Sanctuary, which rose first to the Anles, then to the Knees, then to the Loyns, afterward to a River that could not be passed over : Even so do Preaching Qualifications, in a wise and painful Preacher ; who, as *Paul* saith, when in the Childhood, or first entrance, may speak like Children, and act like Children ; yet when they grow up to be men, they will Speak, Preach, and Act like men, *1 Cor. 13. 11.* This is that which is promised *Psal. 1.* where *David* tells us, *The blessedness of the man that walketh not in the way of the ungodly, but his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in that Law doth he meditate day and night, he shall be like a Tree planted by the Rivers of Water, that bringeth forth his Fruit in season ; His leaf shall not wither, but whatsoever he doth shall prosper.* This is the blessing, of not onely the Godly Christian, but especially of the truly wise, and Godly Preacher, he shall grow and flourish. The like promise we have in *Psal. 92. 12, 13, 14, 15.* where the *Psalmist* tells us, how it will fare with Righteous and Wise Preachers ; *They shall flourish like the Palm-Tree, and grow like the Cedar in Lebanon : Those that be planted in the House of the Lord, shall flourish in the Court of our God ; they shall bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing ; to shew that the Lord is upright.* This also *Paul* implies, in that saying of his to *Timothy*, *1 Epist. 4. 15.* *That thy profiting may appear to all men.*

Thus we see the Point a little confirmed ; but because this Truth has in part already been spoken to, and will necessarily fall under consideration in another place ; I shall say no more to the proof of this,

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this, but only make one Use from it, and that is for encouragement to all wise and painful Preachers,

The fourth Use is of Encouragement.

Know assuredly, the Lord will bless your Seed, and the fruit of your increase. You may reckon your selves Children, that cannot speak in the Name of the Lord; but the Lord hath told you, *He will be with you, and make you as a defended City, and an Iron Pillar, and a Brazen Wall,* Jer. 1. 6, 7. compared with vers. 18. Oh! be encouraged to be sound faithful and diligent; for though you may go out to Preach, as *Jacob* went forth from his Fathers House, when he said, *With my staff I passed over this Jordan, but now I am become two Bands,* Gen. 32. 10. Even so you faithful Preachers shall have a time to say to the Glory of Free-Grace, *I am become two Bands.* The Lord hath promised, *That his Spirit shall lead you, not only unto Truth, but from Truth to Truth, till you are guided into all Truth,* John 16. 13. Therefore be encouraged to persist and go on in Preaching the Word in season and out of season; for the Lord is with you, and he will uphold your goings in his Paths. Oh Beloved, be neither discouraged at your own weakness, nor your many discouragements, *for the Righteous shall flourish like the Palm;* therefore still teach the people knowledge, guide them by the skilfulness of the Lord's hand upon you, from Truth to Truth, from first Principles to higher, and more ennobling Conclusions. Be not Children in your knowledge, but go on towards perfection, as good Ministers of
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Jesus Christ; Preachers that receive freely or largely of the Spirit, should give forth as freely, and still teach the people knowledge. As Preachers grow in knowledge, they should seek that the people might grow in knowledge; also as waters of knowledge flow into them, so should they flow forth unto the people: for as your day is, so shall your strength be; Jesus Christ hath promised to be with you alwayes in such work, *Matth. 28.* And to conclude, take the Counsel of Solomon, *Eccles. 9. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the Grave, whither thou goest.*

You labouring Ones in this Work of the Lord, feed on that Promise *Mat. 13. 12. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.*

And to close, take that good word *1 Cor. 15. 58. Therefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

I now come to the next particular in the Text, which is the Matter which the Preacher preached; that is, *Knowledge: He still taught the people Knowledge;* it was knowledge the Preacher taught; He Preached not to make himself known, or his knowledge known, but to make the people know; *for he still taught the people knowledge.*

One Question may from hence be asked, and that is, *What Knowledge is?*

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Or,

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this, but only make one Use from it, and that is for encouragement to all wise and painful Preachers.

The fourth Use is of Encouragement.

Know assuredly, the Lord will bless your Seed, and the fruit of your increase. You may reckon your selves Children, that cannot speak in the Name of the Lord; but the Lord hath told you, *He will be with you, and make you as a defended City, and an Iron Pillar, and a Brazen Wall,* Jer. 1. 6, 7. compared with vers. 18. Oh! be encouraged to be sound faithful and diligent; for though you may go out to Preach, as *Jacob* went forth from his Fathers House, when he said, *With my staff I passed over this Jordan, but now I am become two Bands,* Gen. 32. 10. Even so you faithful Preachers shall have a time to say to the Glory of Free-Grace, *I am become two Bands.* The Lord hath promised, *That his Spirit shall lead you, not only unto Truth, but from Truth to Truth, till you are guided into all Truth,* John 16. 13. Therefore be encouraged to persist and go on in Preaching the Word in season and out of season; for the Lord is with you, and he will uphold your goings in his Paths. Oh Beloved, be neither discouraged at your own weakness, nor your many discouragements, *for the Righteous shall flourish like the Palm;* therefore still teach the people knowledge, guide them by the skilfulness of the Lord's hand upon you, from Truth to Truth, from first Principles to higher, and more ennobling Conclusions. Be not Children in your knowledge, but go on towards perfection, as good Ministers of

Jesus

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Jesus Christ; Preachers that receive freely or largely of the Spirit, should give forth as freely, and still teach the people knowledge. As Preachers grow in knowledge, they should seek that the people might grow in knowledge; also as waters of knowledge flow into them, so should they flow forth unto the people: for as your day is, so shall your strength be; Jesus Christ hath promised to be with you alwayes in such work, *Matth. 28.* And to conclude, take the Counsel of Solomon, *Eccles. 9. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the Grave, whither thou goest.*

You labouring Ones in this Work of the Lord, feed on that Promise *Mat. 13. 12. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.*

And to close, take that good word *1 Cor. 15. 58. Therefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, alwayes abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

I now come to the next particular in the Text, which is the Matter which the Preacher preached; that is, *Knowledge: He still taught the people Knowledge;* it was knowledge the Preacher taught; He Preached not to make himself known, or his knowledge known, but to make the people know; for *he still taught the people knowledge.*

One Question may from hence be asked, and that is, *What Knowledge is?*

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Or,

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Or, secondly, *What knowledge this is the wise Preacher taught the people.*

To speak a little to the first Query; *What knowledge is?* It is the opposite to ignorance, and consists in the enlightning or informing the Understanding, either concerning the Author, or the Nature of things, or the End and Use of things. I say, *knowledge* is an enriching excellency, enabling men to make true judgment concerning things. He that is destitute of *knowledge*, knows not how to discern things, or to difference one thing from another. But I shall not enlarge here, though I might add there is a double sort of *knowledge*, Natural, and Supernatural; or the *knowledge* of things or objects Divine and Heavenly, or the *knowledge* of things or objects Natural. This Supernatural *knowledge* consists either in the *knowledge* of God or his Will, or the *knowledge* of our selves or others.

But secondly, It may be inquired, What this *knowledge* in particular is which the Preacher taught the people, spoken of in the Text?

I Answer, Not humane *knowledge*, or understanding, and skill in worldly things; but it is *knowledge* of Divine things, or Heavenly things: More particularly it may be distinguished into the *knowledge* of God, as in Himself, Attributes, and Word. Considered secondly, It consists in the *knowledge* of our Spiritual Estates and Duties; And under these two Heads, I humbly conceive all that Heavenly *knowledge* which a Preacher ought to give diligence to teach the people the *knowledge* of may be comprised.

Thus having a little removed the scruple concerning

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concerning *knowledge*, what it is, and what that *knowledge* is Preachers ought to teach the people, we may note this point of Doctrine.

Doct. 6. To wit, *That every wise Preacher ought to teach the people the knowledge of Spiritual things; or, that every wise Preacher ought to teach the people how they may know spiritual things, or be knowing in spiritual things.*

This the Preacher, the wise Preacher in the Text did, and this every wise and Gospel-Preacher ought to do.

Again, the *knowledge* which a wise Preacher ought to teach and impart to the people, 'tis the knowledge of God, and things appertaining to God: Or, secondly, the *knowledge* of our selves, and things belonging to our selves.

But let me a little clear and prove the point to you, *That every wise Preacher ought to teach the people Heavenly knowledge, or the knowledge of God, and of themselves.*

For proof of this, take that passage *Exod. 24. 12.* where the Lord commands *Moses and Aaron* to teach the people *knowledge*: So *Moses* tells us what *Levi* should and ought to do for God's people, *Even teach Jacob God's Judgments, and Israel his Law*, Deut. 33. 10. This *Samuel* well understood, 2 Sam. 12. 23. *But I will teach you the good and the right way.* This also was *Ezra's* practice, for saith the Text, *Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel Statutes and Judgments.* Oh! here is a good Minister indeed, that prepares his heart to teach the people, both by his Life, and doing the Will of God; and also by teaching and in-

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structing them in the *knowledge* of the Law of God. This also was the good *Levites* practice, in 2 *Chro.* 30. 22. *That they taught Israel the good knowledge of the Lord.* This is that the Lord by *Malachi* declares he expects at the hands of his Priests, *chap. 2. 7.* where he saith, *The Priests Lips should, or ought to keep knowledge;* and they, meaning the people, should seek the Law at his mouth. But to trouble you with no more Quotations, to prove this clear Truth; that every wise Preacher ought still to teach the people *knowledge.* The good knowledge of God, is that which every good Preacher ought to impart to the people; I will therefore only add this one more, where we may hear what the Lord saith to such Preachers as do not teach the people *knowledge.* *Wo,* saith he, *unto you Lawyers, for ye have taken away the Key of Knowledge, &c. Luke 7. 52.* The Pharisees and Lawyers of that day, had great thoughts of their *knowledge* and abilities; but saith Christ, *Wo unto you Lawyers, for ye have taken away, or withheld the Key of Knowledge from the people.* Oh Friends, it is woful and unworthy to withhold *knowledge* from the people, if we have *knowledge* to impart to the people.

The second thing I shall do, is to demonstrate, by Argument or Reason, that this is Truth, to wit, That every wise Preacher ought to teach and impart *knowledge* to the people; and that for these Reasons.

Reas. 1. First, Because that is the end, the main end, the very end of their Knowledge. Christ imparts Gifts and Grace to Preachers, yea, makes Preachers upon this account, that they should teach,

teach, instruct, and inform the people. This the Scripture largely gives an account of, as in *Ephes. 4. 12, 13. For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ; till we all come to the unity of the Faith, in the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man.*

Mark, The Preacher hath the Office of Ministry, and the Gifts of Ministry, or Gifts to minister with as a Minister; all for the people, and that also for their Edifying, Unity, Knowledge, and Perfection; therefore they ought to design this for their Business, Not to know for themselves only, but principally to make the people knowing and wise in the *knowledge* of Christ. Now if this be the end of Preachers, certainly every thing should answer its end, or else it is Made, Created, and Ordained in vain: But surely Preachers were not ordained in vain, but to teach the people *knowledge*; they are the peoples eyes, not their own only; they are the peoples Stewards, and therefore what Stewardship or Talent soever they have, they ought to improve them for the people, who are the final end, next to Christ's Glory, of all their Attainments. This also we have given us in *1 Cor. 4. 2. It is required, in Stewards, that a man be found faithful*; and *Luke 22. 32. When thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren.*

Reas. 2. Secondly, The Preachers ought to Preach the people into *knowledge*, because this is that the Preachers profess to do for the people; And are not Preachers bound to what they pretend and profess? that is, to teach the people *knowledge*. Certainly, of all men under Heaven, they are

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most bound to do what they profess, because they reach other men so to do.

Secondly, Because they profess to know above the rate of others; and is it not a shame for them to perform less than other men?

And thirdly, They profess this to be their Conscience, and to be conscious of doing it; and is it not then both shameful and sinful unconscionably to neglect it? Should a Physician pretend to help and cure such as come to him in their sickness, and should nor regard to inquire into their Diseases; nor regard to consult their good, or direct their Patients what to do? Would we not groundedly say, He were both idle and dishonest? Even so are all those Preachers that pretend to promote the peoples good and understanding in the Mystery of Christ, and do not.

Reas. 3. Thirdly, This is that the people do, or ought to expect at their hands; Namely, That they should teach them the good knowledge of God; and therefore this they ought to design, They should teach them the good knowledge of God; and they should not only design it, but labour after it: What was that which *Cornelius* and his Friends came together about, and he sent to *Peter* for, but this, *That he might make them know what was the mind of God*, Acts 10. 33? The people expect not that you should fight for them, or trade and traffick for them, but only that you should instruct them in the Mysteries of Christ, and do all you can to make them know the Truth as it is in Jesus; and of all men under Heaven, your Preachers are the most unconscionable deceivers and cheats,

cheats, that neglect thus to do, and abuse the people by keeping them in ignorance.

Reas. 4. And lastly, Wise Preachers are not only bound thus to do, because made Preachers for this end, and such who have professed, and are expected thus to do; but lastly, are able thus to do also; therefore ought to be found likewise faithful Servants, thus doing, *Mat. 24. 45.* I say, Every wise Preacher is able to teach the people the good knowledge of God: I do not say, Every Preacher, or every one that is called a Preacher, or so calls himself, but I say, every one that God owns for a Preacher, and is truly a wise or spiritual Preacher, is able to teach the people, and ought so to do; as *John* saith, *That which we have seen and heard, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us,* 1 John 1. 3.

Mark, What every wise Preacher can, and doth do, even declare the things of God, or the knowledge of Jesus Christ to the people; and he can and doth endeavour that the people may be brought into the fellowship and enjoyment of their knowledge. Those are foolish Preachers, Lords over Gods Heritage, evil Servants, and Self-seekers, that ingross knowledge for themselves, and design not the people's knowledge, as one main end of all that knowledge they enjoy or design to be made partakers of.

And thus much for the clearing of this Doctrine, That it is the duty of every wise Gospel-Preacher, to make the people wise and knowing in the Mystery of Christ. Now to come to the Application.

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The first Use is of Information.

If this be Preachers Business and Duty to teach the people *knowledge*; then this informs us how unwise and foolish Romish Preachers are, even the Pope and his Prelates, and Clergy, who are so unwise and ignorant of Gospel-Truths and Principles, that they not onely neglect and oppose this practice, but teach and maintain, that Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion, and that *knowledge* is enough for the Priests, and the people must hang their *Knowledge* and Faith upon their Priests Sleeves; and that tis sufficient for the people to do that the Priest commands; and believe as the Church believes. But this is to endanger the people to Hell with great Company, rather than to be saved by the Faith of the Church.

I shall not say much to this Generation of Vipers, these idle Shepherds, these blind Guides, leaders of the blind World; only let such know, we shall not need to say they are foolish Shepherds, and *Peter's* unlearned ones, and none of *Solomon's* wise Preachers; their own Works and Words are sufficient to make their madness manifest to all wise men, or spiritual Believers; seeing what every wise Preacher doth, and ought to do, is even to teach the people *knowledge*, which they neither do, nor judge they ought to do. This shall suffice for this first Use.

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The second Use is of Exhortation.

Let this serve for matter of Exhortation to all Gospel-Preachers, to make this their main business, to shew themselves truly wise and able Preachers, even Workmen that need not be ashamed, by teaching the people *Knowledge*. God hath given you Talents for this very purpose, and the peoples wants and expectations call loudly for this ; namely, that you should be their Lights, and Teachers of them as your Scholars and Children ; therefore intend and attend this as your great Work and Business, in, or by Preaching, to make the people wise and more knowing, in the saving and sanctified *Knowledge* of the Lord Jesus.

Beloved Brethren, this is your and my Business, let us give all diligence to add and contribute more and more to the peoples *knowledge*, doing as *Paul*, *Not seeking our own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved*, 1 Cor. 10. 33. Though wise Preachers must acquire *knowledge* first for themselves, that they may wisely Preach, or be wise for Preaching: Yet having obtained *knowledge* in themselves, they must disperse *knowledge* to their people, and lay out all their endeavours, that the people may know what they know : This *Paul* did make his business, to make the *Ephesians* to understand his *knowledge* in the Mytery of Christ. *Ephes. 3. 4. When you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.*

Mark, *Paul* is not content that he understand, but he Writes and Preaches, to make others understand his *knowledge* in Christ's Mysteries ; not that his aim was to make them understand or know that

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that he had *knowledge* or understanding to admire or depend upon him; but that they might know, in and for themselves, what he knew in himself, and for them he laboured, that the people should know and understand what of Christ he understood; and this seems to be his meaning, by what we find in *vers. 8, 9.* where Paul saith, *That unto him, less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, That I should Preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.* But mark the end for which Paul, and every Gospel-Preacher, should Preach the unsearchable riches of Christ; namely, to let all men see this is the end of Preaching, the peoples Seeing. Oh Preach, Seeing or Divine eye-sight into the people, infuse or distil your *knowledge*, or Christ's *knowledge* into the people, that you may be rightly called, as the Prophets were of old time, even Seers from seeing, and shewing the mind of God to the people, *1 Sam. 9. 9.* Beloved, cause the Scales of Ignorance to fall from the eyes of the blind and ignorant people. Pity the people, and shew your burning love to Christ, by enlightning dark minds in the true *knowledge* of the Lord Jesus; in striving to promote and enlarge the peoples *knowledge*, help the people to come to this necessary *knowledge*, the *knowledge* of themselves. The want of this *knowledge*, is the cause of the great prophaneness, security, and presumption that abounds in the World, men's gross ignorance of themselves; men want true and sufficient acquaintance of themselves; of their sinful, miserable, lost estate by Nature.

Oh! cause all men in their first Principle, and unconverted Estate, to know they are in a damnable

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ble and miserable condition ; there is but one step between them and Hell, *For God is angry with the wicked all the day long, (or every day)* Psal. 7.

11. Make them know there is none good in his natural condition ; *there is none good, no not one that doeth good, no not one among all the multitude of unconverted Men and Women, for all are under sin, both Jews and Gentiles,* Rom. 3. 9, 12.

Awaken mens Consciences that are asleep, to know and consider the danger of a sinful, Christless condition ; yea, make not only Publicans and Sinners know this to be their miserable estate, but make Pharisees, and morally righteous Ones, to know this to be also their misery ; and *that except they be born again of Water, and of the Spirit, they can never enter into the Kingdom of God,* Joh.

3. 5.

'Tis not onely Drunkards, Swearers, Whoremongers, and Scoffers, cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, but also the lostiest pieces of Nature, that are but in a state of Nature, as it is written, *Except your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,* Mat. 5. 20. Oh ! let such understand, that though such persons actings Christ may love, yet oft-times he loves not the principle of their obedience, nor will save their Souls, as is hinted *Mark 10. 21, 22, 23.* Man's good Nature, is bad Nature with God, and such men are as fit and fair for Hell, as the worst Natures, and vilest of men ; as Christ saith, *Mat. 21. 31.* Preach to men the *knowledge* of themselves, and their undone condition, without the Lord Jesus and his
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Righteousness; put them often in mind of that Scripture, *2 Tim. 3. 5. Having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.* Forms of Godliness, or Worship, will no more help a sinful Creature to Heaven, than Food or Physick can give a dead man life, or strength, or empty dishes satisfy a hungry stomach. Though Rome say otherwise, that bare Forms will save sinful Souls; as a little Water, Oyl, Cream, &c. used in Baptism, will save the Infant from damnation, and make it regenerate, and a Child of God; and that every one that receives their idol Host in the Mass, receives infallibly Jesus Christ; and so in other particulars. But you that are wise Preachers, teach your people knowledge, and make them understand, *That without holiness no man shall see God, Heb. 12. 14.* Without forms men may go to Heaven, though never Baptised, and though they have never received the Supper of the Lord; but none without holiness. Doing of those things, whilst in a state of Nature, is not Holiness; for the heart may be as unholy after as before, yea, in the very Act of Communion in the Ordinances, as Judas, *Mat. 26. 20, 23. Ma. 1. 11, to 16.* with that excellent place, *Gal. 6. 15.* Therefore Preach men into the understanding and knowledge of their own vileness and weakness, and unbottom men from leaning or depending on their moral or legal Righteousness; make them know this was that Rock on which the Jews were split, and dropt into Hell. Wherefore because they sought it not (meaning Righteousness) by Faith, but as it were, by the Works of the Law, *Rom. 9. 32.*

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But again, You that are wise Preachers, Preach the people into the *knowledge* of God, as well as into the *knowledge* of themselves; make them to understand the *knowledge* of God, as just, and as merciful. Oh let sinners know God is Just, Holy, and Righteous, *And will by no means, or not at all clear the guilty, or acquit the wicked,* Nahum. 1. 3. Cause the deceived Multitude to know the Just and Holy Nature of God, that they may not flatter and deceive themselves, with hopes and thoughts of happiness in a sinful state, and wayes of wickedness, because God is merciful and gracious; for he is also equally written to be Just and Holy, and a God *visiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, and upon their Childrens Children, unto the third and fourth Generation,* Exod. 34. 7. Oh beloved, Cause ignorant Souls to know and consider if God be just as well as merciful, that they must also be righteous and holy, or else God's justice will not spare them, but condemn them to all eternity, unless they believe on the Name of the Lord Jesus. Oh! cause sinners to know the Justice of God, and how impossible it is to walk on in wickedness and disobedience to the Mind of God, and Righteousness of the Gospel, and be happy, by causing them to know the sense of that Scripture, *Dent. 29. 19, 20. And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart; saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imaginations of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this Book,*
shall

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shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under Heaven.

Brethren, when you have done this, make them know, that are bitten with fiery Serpents, that God hath provided a ransom for wounded sinners; and as *Moses* lifted up the brazen Serpent in the Wilderness, so lift up the Lord Jesus Christ in the Preaching of the Gospel: shew all wounded and undone sinners the way of healing, by the alone Righteousness and Satisfaction of the Lord Jesus; make them know, when wounded in Conscience, and undone in themselves, that then if they come sinners, with their sin and misery upon them, without any Righteousness, Qualifications, Preparations, or Performances, only as sinners, with Ropes about their Necks, *weary and heavy laden, he will ease them, and they shall find rest to their Souls*; and this without money, or monies worth; without regard to their humiliation, repentance, reformation, and amendment of life. Oh, make them understand the free Grace of God to the vilest of returning sinners, make them to know the new and unchangeable Covenant of God with his people, even the Covenant of freest Grace to pardon, in pardoning all sinners, past, present, and to come, and never to alter or change the state and happiness of such Souls to all eternity, *Jer. 31. 31, 32.*

Oh be exhorted, all you that are and would be accounted wise Preachers, thus to Preach to your people, and teach them this good *knowledge* of God, both as just to all not in Christ, and merciful to all in Christ, how vile and miserable soever in themselves; and thus to do, is to teach the people

people *knowledge* aright. Oh Brethren, you Nurses of the Children of God, draw out the Breasts of your Consolation, and give the little ones of Christ nourishment; nourish them with the Word of *knowledge*; and having begotten them to Christ, do not starve those you have begotten to Christ, as bad Nurses do many times their Children; but having begun a good work in any, perfect it to the day of Christ; be *Epaphras*, *alwayes labouring, that the Saints may alwayes stand perfect and compleat in all the Will of God*, Col. 4. 12.

Objection; But some may possibly say to me, *Is it in the Preachers power, how wise soever, to teach or infuse knowledge into the people? Is not this the peculiar prerogative of Jesus Christ, to be eyes to the blind, and to give understanding to the simple? And doth not Paul say, He may plant, and Apollos water, but God must give the increase, Prov. 8. 14, 20. 1 Cor. 3. 6. And therefore why do you urge it on the Preacher, as his Work and Duty, to distil and infuse knowledge into the people, as if it were in his power to teach the people to know.*

Answer; To this I Answer, Doubtless, and beyond peradventure, it is in every wise Preachers power to do his duty, which is thus to lay out himself to the utmost, that the people may know.

And secondly, Every wise Preacher, and the most of Preachers, though wise, might do more at this work than they do.

But 3ly, Though without Divine concurrence and presence with them in the Work, their Work will produce little; yet if they work not diligently at this work, very little advantage can be expected: But if they be faithful and painful, they may,
yea,

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yea, shall do much through him that strengtheneth them, and hath promised to be with them in their way. They are in God's way, and in God's way God will be found, as he hath said *Exod. 4. 12.* with *Mat. 28. 20.*

Lastly, Wise Preachers should still teach the people *knowledge*; for though they know, they without God cannot teach the people *knowledge*; yet God can by them teach his people *knowledge*, even then when they think they can do least for the people.

Therefore to conclude the Answer of this Objection, Let us that Preach the Gospel, consider that of *Solomon, Eccles. 11. 6.* *In the morning sow thy Seed, and in the evening with-hold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.* Therefore you who are Spiritually-wise Preachers of the Gospel, be prevailed upon, to make the peoples knowing, your main business and work in Preaching; like *Paul*, that great Preacher of the *Gentiles*, whose work was to teach all men in or unto all wisdom, that he might present all men perfect in Christ Jesus: *Wherunto*, saith he, *I also labour, striving, according to his working, which worketh in me mightily, Col. 1. 28, 29.* And to conclude this Use; *Let as many as be perfect, be thus minded, Phil. 3. 15.*

The third Use is for Direction.

The next Use or Improvement I shall make of this Point, is for Direction to such Preachers as faithfully endeavour thus to do.

First,

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First, Would you teach your people *Knowledge*, or make your Hearers knowing in the *Knowledge* of Christ; Then let me beseech you to Preach humbly, for a proud Preacher is not likely to become a profitable Preacher. This was the frame of Spirit *Paul* went forth Preaching the Gospel with, *Acts* 20. 19. *Serving the Lord in all humility*, in that Work. A proud Preacher will more strive to Preach out himself unto the people, than the saving *Knowledge* of Jesus Christ into the people. A proud Preacher will be too high to stoop or condescend to the weakness of the capacities of the People; as the proud in heart will not receive Commandments, even so the proud in heart will not teach Commandments. 'Tis too hard for such to teach *Knowledge*, or for the people by such to be taught *Knowledge*: Such Preachers as desire to be profitable Preachers unto others, must learn of that wonderful Preacher the Lord Jesus, *to be meek and lowly of heart*, *Mat.* 11. 29. and do as *Paul* adviseth, *Rom.* 12. 16. *Not to mind high things, but to condescend to men of low estate*. To which I may add what he writes to the Bishops and Deacons of *Philippi*, saying, *Let nothing be done through strife, or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every one on his own things, but every man also on the things of others*, *Phil.* 2. 3, 4.

Secondly, Would you Preach profitably, and cause the people to get *Knowledge*; then labour to Preach plainly. 'Tis plain Preaching will only prove profitable Preaching. This *Paul* seems to mind, in *1 Cor.* 14. as the very scope of that Chapter, to provoke Preachers to Preach plainly

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within, not above the understanding of the People. Asserting, that if a Preacher preach never so rarely; yet if he preach above the understanding of the people, he shall be but as a Barbarian to the people, and not beneficial to them at all. Plainness and Pureness are the two great excellencies of Preaching; and as ever a Gospel-Preacher would be found a profitable Preacher, let him become a plain Preacher. Though high Strains, hard Notions, and obscure or hidden Expressions may most commend amongst men, yet plainness and profitableness will most commend to God, and be most acceptable and advantageous to those that are perfect and prudent. Oh therefore Brethren, all you that Preach the Gospel, so Preach as *Paul* did, as you have it *1 Cor. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.* compared with *2 Cor. 3. 12.* as ever you intend to teach your people *Knowledge*.

Thirdly, If you would distil or infuse your *Knowledge* into the people, do not only Preach to the people, but live out that you Preach before the people; be not only an *Audible* but a *Visible* word to the people. How shall the people learn that from our lips, which they cannot learn from our lives! This made the Scribes and Pharisees, the great Preachers of that day, they could do no good to the people, but as blind Leaders, led the people blindly into the Ditch; was it not from hence, because they say and do not? *Mat. 23. 3.* with that of *Jer. 23. 18, 22.* Oh, as ever you would be profitable Preachers to others, be not unprofitable Preachers to your selves, practise what you Preach, if ever you mean to profit others by that you Preach. Nothing more dulle and bluntness
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the edge of Preaching, than not living out the life of Preaching; therefore *let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven, Mat. 5. 16.*

Fourthly, And especially, Water all your Preaching with Praying, if ever you would reap the fruit of your Preaching. Oh! my beloved Brethren, Would you profit your people much by Preaching, then water your people much by Praying; let the best Seed that can be sown, be sown into the best ground that can be, yet if showers be withheld, a fruitful crop will never be obtained: Even so here, the best Sermons will be but lost Sermons, unless they are watered Sermons. Oh therefore, water your Sermons by Prayers; do not only pray for a Sermon, but for a blessing upon that Sermon; pray not only publicly, but privately for a blessing upon your Labours; lose not your Sermons through shortness, or wantings in praying performances. This was *Paul's* way to get Knowledge to be the blessing of the *Ephesians*, *Philippians*, and *Colossians*, as you may see at large in the first Chapters of those Epistles.

Therefore to conclude these Directions, Watch and pray that the Enemy steal not your Seed, or Christ's Seed rather, away out of the minds and understandings of the people. If any shall say, This is no more then we knew before: yet let me, as once *Peter* did, tell you, *I think it meet, as long as I am in this Tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance of those things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth,* 2 Pet. 1. 12.

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*The fourth Use is a word of Exhortation
to the People.*

The fourth Use shall be a word to the people enjoying wise Preachers, that thus labour among you. Let it be a word of Exhortation to all such to take the Apostle's counsel, *1 Thess. 5. 12, 13. We beseech you Brethren, to know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them very highly for their work sake.* Such are truly wise Preachers; yea, such are painful Preachers, and therefore ought to be honoured Preachers; such are profitable Preachers, therefore worthy to be honoured Preachers; Therefore esteem highly them that are such. I do not mean to provoke you only so to honour, or esteem, as to approve, commend, or encourage such in their Labours; but especially honour these, by submitting and subjecting your selves, yea, your Souls to their Doctrine; by living and acting, according to their teaching, who teach according to the form of sound Doctrine contained in the Scriptures.

Oh my dear Friends, this is the greatest honour, esteem, and encouragement you can possibly bestow upon painful Preachers; thus saith the Apostle *John*, in *3 Epist. 3, 4. I rejoiced greatly when the Brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkedst in the truth; I have no greater joy, then to hear that my Children walk in truth, or according to truth.* The like saith *Paul* in that forecited *1 Thess. 2. 19, 20. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?*
Are

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'Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus at his coming? For ye are our Glory and Joy. But what was the reason of this exceeding Joy, you have it declared in the first Chapter. We give thanks to God alwayes for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembring, without ceasing, your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, &c. For our Gospel came not unto you in Word only, but also in Power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake; and ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost: So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia; For from you sounded out the Word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your Faith to Godward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak any thing.

This, Beloved, is the honour, esteem, encouragement, and rejoycing, wise and Spiritual Preachers most desire; that you that hear them, should be wise, truly wise, holy, diligent, fruitful Hearers. There is nothing so much discourages, grieves, and dishonours wise Preachers, as to find their Hearers unwise, idle, unthankful, unfruitful, and unholy; this grieves them to the heart when they run in vain, and labour in vain, as you have his expression *Phil. 2. 16.* Oh, grieve not the Spirit of God, nor the Spirit of your Preachers, by quenching the Spirit, and despising Prophecie, as too many do. If it be a sin to neglect Preaching, and not to teach the people Knowledge, as I have largely proved; yea, if it

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be not only a neglect, but a most unconscionable neglect not to teach the people *Knowledge*. Let me then tell proud, carnal, unbelieving, negligent, forgetful, disobedient, unfruitful Hearers, 'tis not only a sin, but a complicated sin; yea, it is not infirmity, but most unconscionable dealing with the Lord Jesus, your painful Preachers, and your own Souls. Therefore look well to it, for God will not bear it, nor hold such sinners guiltless that thus take his Name in vain, and turn his Grace into wantonness.

I beseech you think seriously of a Text or two, *2 Chron. 36. 15, 16, 17. And the Lord God of their Fathers sent to them by his Messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place: But they mocked the Messengers of God, and despised his Words, and misused his Prophets, until the Wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the King of the Caldees, who slew their young men with the Sword in the House of their Sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young Man, or Maiden, old Man, or him that stooped for Age; he gave them all into his hand.*

Oh, mark how dreadful a sin it is to be a despiser, or an opposer of Preachers! you may read the hainousness of the sin, in the dreadfulnes of the judgment.

Take one place more, *2 Thess. 2. 10, 11, 12. With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved.*

Oh mark it, you that do, or might, if the fault be

be not your own, enjoy good Preachers, and pure Preaching, and will not, may, and care not for it; God will send you Preachers sad, or bad enough, that shall only deceive and delude you, and for this very cause; *Even because*, saith the Apostle, *God will send them strong delusions that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned that believed not through the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

Oh think seriously of this, you sinful, proud, unthankful, forgetful, or unfruitful Hearers: God will not always strive with you, or wait upon you, or continue the Preaching of the Gospel among you. Therefore provoke not the Lord to jealousy, by neglecting and perverting of his Ordinances.

But to close this Use, let me give you two or three Directions how to answer this Use.

First, Is this yet true acquaintance with the greatness and grossness of ignorance, and especially of your own ignorance in particular? Pride makes men think they see, and despise the ignorance and simplicity of others; but 'tis ignorance and blindness that makes poor and proud Souls like their own ignorance. Therefore if you would be found the Friends and Preservers of *Knowledge*, learn to know your own ignorance in the things of Jesus Christ. Yea, consider how dishonourable and truly reproachful it is for a Professor, or a Christian, to be an ignorant person; 'tis as reproachful, as for a Guide to be blind, or a Ruler to be clad in Rags; than which, what is more dishonourable? A Fool, in Civil or Natural things, is counted a dishonour to a Family, and a burthen-

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some Relation ; even such are foolish Christians, or persons ignorant in the Mysteries and Knowledge of Jesus Christ. Now that the most, yea, the best of Professors are too ignorant, take two Texts, 1 Cor. 13. 9. *For we know but in part, and prophesie but in part ;* therefore let none, how wise soever, think themselves wise enough ; but it is these thoughts keeps many Hearers from being wise ; Jer. 8. 8. *How do you say we are wise, and the Law of the Lord is with us, and we will come no more unto the,* Chap. 2. 31. Therefore, as the cure of this Disease in the first place, remember what *Paul* writes for this purpose, 1 Cor. 8. 2. *If any man thinks that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.* Again ;

Secondly, Take this Direction if you would be a knowing people, be found a doing people, faithfully and humbly doing what you know of Jesus Christ. This is the way to know more and much of Jesus Christ, to be practical Christians ; *Hos. 6. 3. Then shall we know* (that is, we shall then know what we knew not before, when or how) *if we follow on to know the Lord ;* and in *John 7. 17. If any man will do his Will, he shall know that the Doctrine is of God.*

Thirdly, Be diligent about this business of Knowledge ; if ever thou wouldest know, as *James* saith, *Let not a wavering-minded man think he shall receive any thing ;* even so say I, Let not the slothful, or the idle Christian, think he shall receive, or ever attain Knowledge with such a frame of Spirit. With what sloth and idleness, neglectfulness and forgetfulness do too many Professors pursue Knowledge ? Therefore be not slothful in business

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finest of this nature, but be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Rom. 12. 11.

Fourthly, Hold much and close communion with knowing, wise, and holy Persons: This made *Apollos* become more wise and knowing, even his communion with *Aquila*, Acts 18. And this *Solomon* teacheth us, *Prov. 13. 20.* telling us, *That he that walketh with wise men, shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*

But *lastly*, If you would become a knowing people in the *Knowledge* of God, be a praying people; Prayer must relieve both Preacher, and the preached to, in this thing; Oh therefore be much in Prayer. This was *David's* practice, *Psal. 119. 18.* *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law.* And to close, remember what *James* saith, *chap. 1. 4.* *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth none, and it shall be given.* Thus much for this Point.

Now to proceed in the Text, it is added; *Yea, he gave good heed.* This is the next piece of the description of a wise Preacher, *he gave good heed.* From hence observe;

Doct. 7. That he Preached not rashly, but heedfully.

'Tis folly to be slight or rash in any business, but especially in God's Matters, or in the Matters of Preaching; *Yea, he gave good heed*; it is good to Preach heedfully. As Preaching is honourable Work, so it is to be honourably performed; as it is weighty and difficult Work, even so ought Preachers warily and heedfully to perform and pursue

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pursue it. This we find imposed upon Elders or Preachers, *Acts 20. 28. Take heed therefore unto your selves; so in 1 Tim. 4. 16. Take heed unto thy self, and to thy Doctrine.* Preaching-Work ought to be heedfully, yea most heedfully performed.

Question; But it may be demanded, *What is that which a Preacher ought thus heedfully to mind?*

In general I Answer, It is his Preaching. This is clear in the Text, by that which is added, — *and sought out, and set in order many Proverbs;* It was the setting in order of Parables the Preacher gave good heed unto.

But more particularly to Answer this Query; First, He ought to give good heed to the observing what the present state and need of the people calls for; for he is by Preaching, to feed the people with food seasonable and convenient for them: I do not say, That he is to eye or answer the wanton expectations of the Hearer, but the present necessity and need of the Hearer. This is laid down *Mat. 24. 45. Who then is a wise and faithful Servant to give them meat in due season?* A wise Preacher must oversee the state of the Flock, in this regard, to know what they are, and what they want at the present, that he may by Doctrine give every one, not some, but *everyone* his meat in due season. Sinners, and unconverted Souls in a Congregation, must be heedfully provided for; and the Saints and Children of God in the Assembly, must much less be neglected; the minds of the ignorant must be enlightened, and the mouth of the Adversary must be stopped. The Faith of the doubting must be strengthened, and the Faith of the estab-
lished

blished secured. The troubled Conscience must be comforted, and the Conscience of the sleepy and secure awakned. This is now to give good heed how we Preach, thus wisely to mind and consider them we Preach to.

Secondly, For a Preacher to give good heed how he Preaches, is needfully to observe or consider the present Vision of the Lord, or what the Spirit of the Lord at present layes warm and fresh in upon his heart to deliver as his present Message, and seasonable to the people. That Message which is very lawful and seasonable to deliver to the people at one time, is neither seasonable nor lawful to deliver at another time. There is a time, and but a time, that is seasonable for any thing; so there is a time, and but a time, when some Truths are seasonable. Therefore this is that Preachers should heedfully mind, the teaching, moving, and turning of their Spirits, this or that way, by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus; and give up themselves to the manuduction of that Spirit. Thus did the living Creatures, *Ezek. 1. 12. And they went every one straight forward; whither the Spirit was to go they went, and they turned not when they went.* This is Preacher's motion, and thus to move, is heedfully to Preach. Thus did *Isaiah*, that good Watchman, *Chap. 21. 7, 8. He bearkened diligently with much heed; and he cryed, a Lyon; My Lord, I stand continually upon the Watch-tower in the day time, and I am set in my Ward whole nights.* But again;

Thirdly, Heedfully to Preach, is heedfully to observe our scope and end in Preaching. As in some respects the end may be said to crown all, even so

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so may I say of Preaching. If ends be not right and honourable, it will spoil all, as the dead Fly doth the Apothecaries precious Oyntment. A Preacher cannot think to do much good by Preaching, that hath low or poor aims or ends in Preaching. The goodness of the Work doth not argue the goodness of a Man's Aims or Ends in Preaching: But if ever Preachers would do good at Preaching, let them heedfully mind their Ends. When Ends are right, God usually blesteth; but when Ends are naught and low, God usually blasts; as you have it *Haggi* 1. 6, to 11. compared with *Zech.* 7. 5, 6. where the Lord renders the reason of all the blasts or disappointments they met with, was, *Because of the corruptness of their ends.* Had not sinful self lay at the bottom of the sacrificing, and fasting, and calling upon his Name, they should have had a Blessing; but this withheld it from them: Self-endedness at Preaching, is heedless and fruitless Preaching, God will not bless, with any great success, such Preaching: therefore Preach heedfully or well-minding that your ends be holy, and pure, even the glorifying God, and the profiting the Souls of the people. In discharge of Duty, these are right Ends, and not to Preach for Applause, Credit, or much less Merchandize. But again;

Fourthly, Preachers should heedfully; *yea, give good heed* (as in the Text) to the Matter of their Preaching, and not rashly say, the Lord saith! They must Search the Scripture, as well as Preach the Scripture, remembring *David*, Psalm. 39. *I said, I will take heed to my wayes that I sin not with my tongue;* and what *Solomon* saith, *Suffer*
not

not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say before the Angel it was a sin, Eccles. 5. 6. But this I must speak more to on another particular, and therefore shall come to the Reasons of the Point that Preachers had need to give good heed to what they Preach.

Reas. 1. First, Because if they Preach heedlessly, Christ will mind it heedfully. 'Tis dangerous Preaching heedlessly in the ears of heedful Hearers, but especially in the ears of Jesus Christ, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, and observes all our deportments in his Concernments. If he hear us Preach heedlessly, he will set this sin in order before us, though he seem to over-look it, and we think he hath forgotten it. Carelesness and rashness in the Ministry of the Lord's Word, meets with swiftest Observation, and severest Chastisements: Therefore take heed, and be holy, ye that bear the Vessels of the Lord, remembering the case of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, Levit. 10. and of *Uzzah*, 2 Sam. 6. 6, 7.

Reas. 2. Secondly, The reason of Preachers heedfulness is this, The Observance of men. Are the Hearers, Sinners, and the worst of Hearers? they will and do observe the best of Preachers, and lie, as it were, in wait to entrap and catch them, or intangle them in their talk or Preaching. Such as can observe little of the Marrow of Preaching, or a Sermon, will be able enough to observe all the Mistakes or Errata's of a Sermon: Therefore take away occasion from them that seek it, as *Paul* did, 2 Cor. 11. 12.

But again, 2ly, Let Preachers preach heedfully, because of Saints; their eyes are upon you, and their

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their ears open to you, and they are taught of God to know all things, and as Spiritual men judge all things, and have senses exercised; and, like these noble *Bereans*, will try all things: Therefore, O therefore, Preach with good heed, and Preach only good things for their Knowledge.

Reas. 3. Thirdly, Preachers had need Preach heedfully, because that which they Preach is hard and difficult to Preach. Preaching is not easie Work, it is hard Work, 'tis curious Work, it needs much wariness, wisdom, and circumspection, to draw Water out of these Wells of Salvation, and to fetch Gold out of these Mines of Divine Wisdom; therefore ought they to give good heed to Preaching.

Reas. 4. And lastly, Preachers should give good heed how they Preach, because of the worth and excellency of what they Preach. Though men care not how they scatter their dross, yet they are very careful what they do with their refined Gold. Though the Husband-man passeth not what he doth with his Chaff, yet he is very careful what he doth with his Seed-corn. Even so should it be with Preachers, they should be very heedful where they Sow, and how they bestow their principal Wheat. Oh! Sow not upon the Rocks, nor on the High-way side, but on good Ground; and carefully look to your Seed, to Christ's Seed; it is too choice to sustain any loss; Oh therefore, heedfully Preach, that you lose not your labour, nor your reward.

Thus much for the Reasons of this Point; now to close this Head with a word or two of *Application*.

First

First of Reproof.

Application ; First, If Preachers ought to give good heed how they Preach, then this ministers a word of Reproof to such as are heedless Preachers, that think it is an easie facile Work to dispense and propagate Truth ; surely such do not remember the weightiness of Preaching, so they can but Preach pleasingly to men, profitably to themselves, and securely in respect of others ; they think it is enough, never applying themselves to over-see or consider the state of the Flock, the various state of their Hearers, the avoiding of their Enemies, the Salvation of Sinners, and the perfecting of the Saints, by an acute, exact, circumspect, thorough search and enquiry after Gospel-Truths, that they might Speak and Preach as the Oracles of God. Well, I shall not stand upon this, only be minding these of that sad word ; *Cursed be he that doth the Work of the Lord negligently* : And let these Preachers know, what God hath threatned to all flight Preachers, by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, saying, *Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord ; I am weary with holding in ; I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the Assembly of young men together ; for even the Husband with the Wife shall be taken, the Aged with him that is full of dayes ; And their Houses shall be turned unto others, with their Fields and Wives together ; for I will stretch out my hand upon the Inhabitants of the Land, saith the Lord : For from the least of them, even unto the greatest of them, every one of them is given to covetousness ; and from the Prophet even unto the Priest,*
every

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every one dealeth falsly. They have healed also the hurt of the Daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace, Jer. 6. 11, 12, 13, 14.

Note; And so I conclude this Use, 'Tis a dangerous and a destructive evil, to be a sleighty Prophet or Preacher.

The second Use is of Exhortation.

Secondly, Let this exhort all wise Gospel-Preachers to remember the Text, and also give good heed to the Work of Preaching: 'Tis not only honourable, but difficult, likewise 'tis high, 'tis hard; Oh therefore give good heed to this Work of Preaching. 'Tis not man's Work, or a Work performed so much for men, as for God. 'Tis Soul-Work; as you love Souls, or have a value of immortal Souls, take heed to your selves in this Work, this blessed Work of Preaching. Oh be intent upon this thing, to seek the profit of many that they may be saved. Oh Speak or Preach as *Paul* words it, as you ought to speak, *Ephes. 6. 20.* study Scripture, study Men, listen to the Spirit, follow its Guidance, give your selves up to this Work, taking *Solomon's* Counsel, *Eccles. 9. 10.* *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.* Oh strive mightily, to be spiritually exact, and perfect Preachers. Oh remember, *It is required of a Steward, that he be found faithful,* 1 Cor. 4. 2. Therefore let me beseech you, Men, Brethren, and Fathers, even all you that are Christ's Stewards, and Gospel-Preachers, give good heed
to

to this thing, that you may give up your account with joy, and not with grief of heart.

The third Use is of Vindication.

Thirdly, Let this Doctrine vindicate such Preachers as give good heed in Preaching, so to Preach, that they may approve themselves good Work-men, even Work-men that need not be ashamed, dividing the Word aright; such as Preach not as pleasing men, but as pleasing God, which tryeth the hearts, *1 Thess. 2. 4.*

I say, This Truth now cleared, will acquit and justify all such sober, serious, exquisite, faithful, painful, wise Preachers, which give good heed, and apply themselves to be Physicians of Value, such as endeavour both to sound their own, and the peoples hearts, and to see that they Preach as the Spirit gives them utterance and guidance, *Acts 2. 4.* Such Preachers as seek not yours, but you, that your Souls may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus. I say, Let this justify the exactness and diligence of those, that in the dividing of the Word, make it their business to divide it aright, and to omit, nor lose nothing of all the Riches of such Scriptures, as the Spirit of the Lord opens to them; but endeavour to make full proof of their Ministry, in a ministration of the All committed to their trust, following that Direction of our Lord, *Gather up the Fragments that nothing be lost, John 6. 12.* So these painful and laborious Bees move from Flower to Flower, that is, from Text to Text, and from Syllable to Syllable, that they may help you to Honey, that by Line upon

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Line, and Precept upon Precept, here a little and there a little, seek to impart to you the whole Counsel of God ; I say, Let such Preachers be justified, and not taxed, as at this day, by some who make use of that saying, *What need this waste ?* Mar. 26. 8. What need this curiousness, this tediousness, so much dwelling upon a Text ?

Why, let this serve to Answer such ; Is there not a cause, when it is required of a Steward to be found faithful ? And this is faithful dealing with Jesus Christ and his Word, to let nothing be lost.

But again, secondly, If your Preachers, wise Preachers. do give good heed, and consider the state of the Flock, and whereof they have need, and do deal home and plainly with your Consciences in all faithfulness, not sparing any man, or flatterring any man, or pleasing any man, but dealing faithfully with all men, as approving themselves to God. Why then consider, I pray you, It is required of Stewards to be faithful, and such are Stewards even of the manifold Grace of God ; and therefore it is required of them that they be faithful. Oh, let this justify all wise, holy, humble, diligent, painful, faithful Preachers, that seek to turn many from their iniquity ; that give good heed, and all diligence so to Preach, that they may declare that they have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, not handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the Truth, *Commending our selves to every man's Conscience in the sight of God,* 2 Cor. 4. 2.

And so much for this Use and this Point.

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I now come to the next Word and Work of a wise Preacher, that is, *He sought out.*

This is the next Work; and to search or seek out: A good or a wise Preacher, doth not only give out, and not keep in any thing of all that good Knowledge, or Will of the Lord Jesus made out to his Soul; But further he seeks or searches out after more of the Knowledge of Jesus Christ to be further imparted to him; in what is in part known by him, or in what as yet of Christ is not manifest, but hid from him and them, and may be imparted to them: For the choicest, or most comprehending Servant, or Preacher of the Lord Jesus, knows but in part, and prophesies but in part, and therefore had need to search, enquire, or hunt after that of the mind of Christ yet behind, or unknown of him, and which may, for ought he knows, be made manifest to him.

Three things I suppose this Phrase may import.

First, To examine and receive things already *review* viewed or known.

Secondly, To clear and discharge what we know, from what-ever Objections or Cavils might be brought against what we know, or conceive we know.

Thirdly, To seek out, is to endeavour to get either fresh Visions of God in our Souls, or further and exacter insight into such Visions of God as already we have received.

All this seems clearly implied in this Act of the wise Preacher, as is most clear, by considering the next word, *And set in order*, or in their due order, *many Proverbs.* The Work of the truly, or spiritually wise Preacher, is to search, or seek af-

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ter; or search, or seek into the knowledge of what is known, or should be known, or may be known. This is the Trade of God's Commands, in order to a Preacher's Duty.

Doct. 8. The Doctrine hence may be this; That the wise Preacher's Work, is not an easie, but an hard task, to attain the comprehension or full understanding requisite to be found in every Minister of Christ.

His life is a continued act of seeking, or enquiring after fuller discoveries of the mind of Christ. This is plainly implied in this phrase; *he sought out*, or sought after, or sought into the way of setting Parables in order.

To clear up this Point, two things need proving; First, That the Preacher's Task or Duty, is an hard Task or Duty. Secondly, His life is a continued Act of learning the mind of Christ. As he doth not do all at once he hath to do for Christ, neither doth he learn all at any one season he hath to learn from Jesus Christ: He is alwayes doing, and alwayes learning, until he dies. Therefore is the Preacher's Work hard Work. This *Moses* well understood, *Exod. 3d, 4th, and 6th Chapters*. This *Jeremiah* also apprehended in his first Chapter; And this *Paul* concludes concerning his Ministry, *1 Cor. 16. 15.* But not to heap up testimonies for a thing so clear; Consider this, namely what the Preacher's Work is resembled to:

First 'Tis called a *Warfare*, or they are resembled to valiant Souldiers; and a Souldier's life is a life of hazard and hardship, even so is the Preachers.

Secondly, 'Tis stiled a *Watchman's life*, and to be

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be a good Watch-man, is a hard life, and labourious.

Thirdly, He is called a *Shepherd*, and that is no easie life.

Fourthly, They are called *Husband-men*, and *Labourers*, and *Builders*; all which prove Preaching to be a hard Work.

But to make this more clear; consider, 'tis a Trade or Business that is alwayes carrying on, I had almost said night and day; and therefore sure it can be no easie, but hard Work, because it is perpetual Work. But such is the Preacher's Work, He must not onely be alwayes preaching, but alwayes learning, yea, learning while teaching, in looking after the Mind of Christ. His Work is never done, alwayes doing, running on more and more after fresh and fuller discoveries of the Will of God. 'Tis an every day, yea, night and day study of the Word and Wayes of God; *be sought out*, 'tis opened to us in *Prov. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4.* 'Tis a Work a man must cry for, seek for, yea, dig for, and hunt for, that intends to find it; compared with *Job 3. 21.*

Take one passage more, where good and wise Preachers may be resembled to Servants, and the Hand-maids *David* speaks of, *Psal. 123. 2.* Of to the good Woman, perceiving that her Merchandizing Commodity is good, therefore her Candle goeth not out by night. From all which may easily be gathered, what a hard and difficult, constant and painful life and labour, the wise Preacher's labour and life is.

Thus much for the proof of the Proposition. Let me now give you some Arguments to evince

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this, *That Preachers Work is hard labour, and continual employment.*

Arg. 1. First, This must needs be thus, because of the matter of Preaching, which is the Mind and Will of Christ contained in the Scriptures. Now this Word of Scripture, is like deep, yea, very deep waters; 'tis hard to get the golden precious Truths, and Counsels of Christ, contained in the bottom or body of Scripture, forth of them. The Word of God is perfect and sufficient, but not so plain and obvious, that without much study and search, the whole Counsel or Will of God contained therein will be attained. In the Word lies contained the manifold wisdom of God; but 'tis hard to find out the sum and variety thereof without much diligence. This Solomon implyeth, when he saith, Counsel in the heart of man is like deep waters; but a man of understanding will draw it out, Prov. 29. 5. Now if that Wisdom or Counsel which is in the heart of wise men is like deep waters, and it requirer wisdom and labour too for the drawing it out; Oh, how much more doth it require the wisest Preachers wisdom and pains to dive into the Counsels of Christ, contained and centered in these most deep Wells of Salvation, or Waters of the Sanctuary, the Word of God! Yea, doubtless our experience witnesseth to it, and we daily find all Truth is in the Scripture contained; yet can we hardly draw out or comprehend so much of Truth, as is essentially requisite for our selves, and such as we preach to. This David witnesseth, when he saith, Thy Righteousness is like the great Mountains, and thy Judgments are a great deep, Psal. 36. 6. Now if the Judgments,

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ments, Statutes, Truths, Ordinances of Christ, all which the Preacher is to reveal, and declare to the People, be such a great Deep, and so hard to fathom; Oh, how hard then is his work that is a wise Preacher, he may well be searching out and after this Will of God, and conclude, who is sufficient for these things? But again;

Arg. 2. Secondly, As the matter of their Preaching is high, and hard to attain; even so the Work must needs be hard in respect of themselves. They are dull and hard of Learning in what they must deliver out. Oh! if a Preachers Lesson be hard, and he as hard to learn any Lesson; sure their task must needs be a hard task: But that the best of Preachers are bad and dull Learners is most evident, both by Scripture and plentiful experience; as in that glorious Saint and Preacher *Job*. How much pains did God take with *Job* from his Conversion, even till old age, and yet but in God's account a small shallow Scholar; notwithstanding all God's pains in correcting of him, yet saith God, *Who is it that darkneth counsel by words without knowledge?* Job 38. 2. Yea, God makes *Job* plead guilty to this Indictment, Chap. 40. 3, 4 5. with 42. And surely such Preachers are not *Jobs*, but proud *Pharisees*, who will, or dare say, or think otherwise of themselves. Such dull, bad, learners of the Mind of God, were *Job's* three Friends, Chap. 42. 7. Yea, such were Christ's Disciples and Apostles, those Master-Preachers, those Foundation-Layers; *Luke 24. 25. O Fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken.* Oh Beloved! if Preachers have hard and many Lessons to learn, and are exceeding dull

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and incapacious of learning; yea, such that have neither head, heart, nor will to learn. O sure their work is hard, and they need be early and late seeking and searching out these acceptable words.

Arg. 3. Thirdly, Preaching-Work is hard Work, because of such to whom we preach. 'Tis hard to find out what words they want, and it is not wisdom to preach such words as are not wanting, or at present necessary. For though every, and any word that is or can be preached, is pure and perfect, yet not at all times, seasonable or profitable; you know whose rule it is, *All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient*, 1 Cor. 6. 12. Though every Truth not only may, but ought to be preached, yet not at all times, or to all sorts of Hearers. There is a peculiar or apt time for every purpose under the Sun.

Now the wisdom of the Preacher is to know how to time his Word or Doctrine to the present wants and necessities of the people, and this is very hard, and requires searching out of the peoples wants.

Secondly, This makes the Preachers Work hard, how wise a Preacher soever he be, to find out, not only their wants, but also how to apply that which is intended for them, to be received or accepted by them; even God's own People are a wayward and indisposed People, or Children, to the receiving of Spiritual Food or Physick; and 'tis a great piece of Heavenly skill, and hard to attain. *Paul* himself writes it as a great piece of Heavenly Craft, 2 Cor. 12. 16.

But, thirdly, grant a Preacher hath wisely gone these steps, yet he must still be seeking out how to preserve and water the Seed he hath been admitted

to Sow, that he lose not the things that he hath wrought; for 'tis the part of a foolish Preacher to preach, and preach much, and not regard what becomes of his Labours. 'Tis to be like the foolish Ostrich mentioned *Job* 39. 13, 14, 15, 16. Now this Act makes the Preacher's Act hard work to water and watch his Seed sown, that he lose not his labour; therefore his work is hard work.

Arg. 4. And lastly, The Preacher's task is very hard, because of that great opposition and difficulty, which Preachers and preaching-work must and doth meet withal; that work how easie soever in it self, yet if it cannot be performed without much opposition, is then and thereby become hard work, even thus is preaching become hard work, because with much hardship, labour, and difficulty, it must be performed: Satan and Sinners, yea, even Saints themselves, make the Preacher's Work hard, yea, very hard and troublesome by their opposition. Look how the Enemies of the *Jews* withstood the building of the Temple; even so doth Satan hinder the building of the Spiritual Temple, or preaching of the Gospel; So *Paul* words it, *1 Thess.* 2. 18. Thus he made the preaching of the Gospel decline from *Jerusalem*, *Acts* 8. 1. with *Acts* 13. 50. And although the preaching of the Word must not be hindered or declined because of Persecution, yet is Persecution a means to make Preachers look about them, and their work to be hard to them.

And again, The Preacher's task is made very hard by the opposition of false Teachers, which oppose the Truth of the Gospel; and who, as *Jannes* and *Jambres* withstood *Moses*, so do they also resist

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resist the Truth, 2 Tim. 3. 8. These constrain the wisest of Preachers to seek out how to preach, that such may not gain-say the Truth; or at least, that their folly may be made manifest to all men of sober minds; and this is hard work. How hard was *Paul's* work made to cut off occasion from them, that sought occasion, when he is to preach Justification by Faith only, without the Works of the Law? How did the Jewish Teachers oppose him? Acts 21. 27, 28, 29, 30. When he teaches the Doctrine of *Free-Grace* for the worst of sinners, notwithstanding the greatest of sins, is he not slandered as if he taught liberty to sin? Rom. 3. 8. If he teach the cessation of the Law, as to life, *How is his preaching opposed and slandered?* 1 Tim. 1. 6, 7. So when he preaches down legal Ceremonies, as Circumcision, and Meats, Drinks, Holy-dayes, New-Moons, and Sabbaths: What labour is *Paul* forced to use to defend this Doctrine against those Philosophers and Deceivers? Gal. 6. 11, 12, 13. with Col. 2. 8, 16, 17. downwards to the close of that Chapter.

Again, when the Apostles preach the Kingly Power of the Lord Jesus Christ in his own Kingdom and Church, how are they opposed? Acts 3. with Chap. 17. Now the silencing, answering, and preventing the designs of Satan, and his Instruments, slandering and opposing the Truth, makes the Preachers of the Gospel much labour to seek out how to defend and establish the truth of the Gospel.

But lastly, Preachers work is made laborious, and hard, by the subtilty, evasions, glosses, excuses, colours, and pretences, which poor sinners strive

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strive to hide themselves under, and to evade the power of the Word brought against them. This makes the Preacher's labour very hard ; so to Preach, that every Soul may be brought under the power of it, and every mouth may be stopped : By the doing of this Work, also by preaching among Saints, how much opposition do the Preachers of the Gospel procure by it ? as is clear 1 Cor. 4. 14. to the end of the Chapter ; so in 2 Cor. 12 and 13 Chapters : By all which it will appear, that the Preacher had need, yea, great need, to seek and search out Arguments to support, incourage, and uphold himself in the doing of his duty, and to deliver the Gospel from being perverted and made of no use, by the many designs and devices of Enemies and Friends.

Thus much for the clearing of the Point, to wit, That every wise Gospel-preacher's Work is not easie, but very hard, to seek after the attainment and comprehension of understanding requisite to be found in every Minister of the Lord Jesus.

Now by way of *Application*. First, If it be thus, it informs us and instructs us in two Particulars.

The first Use is of Instruction.

First, How ignorant and mistaken such mens thoughts and principles are, as report and imagine that Preaching is easie work, and the Preacher's Life is an idle Life or Calling. It appears to me, as these never had the honour to be called to this Work, so these little know what Gospel-preaching is ;

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is; but like *Peter's* natural bruit-beasts, *Speak evil of things and persons they know not*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 12. Surely these never read, or never considered what *Paul* found Preaching to be, that thus speak contemptuously and foolishly of it, 2 *Cor.* 6. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Can that be slight, easie, idle Work, which is Night and Day-Work, which is Soul and Body-Work; that must be done faithfully, wisely, in season, and out of season? Sure the ignorance, pride, and unbelief of such is very great. I shall say no more to such deceived Souls but only this, Consider what hath been upon this Doctrine offered, and read the Rules and Directions *Paul* gives to *Timothy* about Preaching; and then tell me whether it be an easie, much less an idle trifling imployment, yea or no?

The second Use is of Instruction.

But secondly, If Preaching be such an hard Work, or Task, and Labour, to perform it wisely and spiritually; Then this acquaints us what unwise and idle sinful Preachers such are as pretend to Preaching, yet take no pains in the performance of this Work, but trifle and idle in this weighty & honourable Imployment. Such may do well to bethink themselves, it is required of Stewards, that they be faithful; and remember what God hath said, *He will not hold such guiltless as take his Name in vain.* Let such idle careless Shepherds, as pretend to be Gospel-Preachers, wise and honourable Preachers, view that word *Ezek.* 34. with *Zech.* 11. 17. *Wo to the idol Shepherd that leaves the Flock; the Sword shall be upon his Arm, and upon his right Eye;*

Eye; his Arm shall be clean dried up, and his right Eye shall be utterly darkned.

Such worthless Preachers are like the evil Spies we read of *Numb. 13. 32.* which brought up an evil report upon the good Land of Promise; so these bring up an evil report upon the good Word and Ordinance of God, the preaching of the Gospel, by their light, idle, careless, carnal, and unprofitable preaching of the Word; because they seek not out, nor search after the setting of Parables or Gospel-Mysteries aright; neither take pains to consider what the Peoples wants are to supply them; nor what the Peoples ignorance or error is, to avoid it, and deliver the preaching of the Gospel from their mistakings, pervertings; or avoiding, by Armour on the right hand and on the left, leaving the People under such generalities, as that they can deceive and flatter themselves, that their condition is good, and the Promises belong to them, though they are in the Gall of Bitterness, and the Bond of Iniquity; a form of Godliness, without the power of it, not making it their business, to take away the Cloaks and Shifts, Pleas and Excuses, Pretences and Fig-leaves, under which poor sinners shelter and hide themselves from the force of their Preaching, and the wrath of God, although they walk on in the stubbornness of their hearts, and add drunkenness to thirst, and cry, *God will spare, Deut. 29. 19.*

I say no more to these dumb idle Shepherds, or Preachers of our day, that by thus doing, cause their, or rather Christ's good Commodity, to be evil spoken of. But O that they would remember that saying of the Lord to their Brethren, the Sons
of

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of Eli, 1 Sam. 2. 22, 29, 30. I say, *Remember, those that honour God shall be honoured of him; but they that despise him, shall be lightly esteemed of him.* And wo to that Preacher that God esteems lightly of.

I shall say no more to these, who-ever they be, Prelates or Pelants, Doctors or Dunces, Batchelors or Novices in Divinity, for the pure preaching of the Gospel, wholike unwise and foolish Shepherds and Preachers, lightly or slightly preach; onely hear and consider that Scripture, *Mal. 1. 6. Wo unto you, O Priests, that despise my Name; and ye say, Wherein have we despised thy Name? Yea, offer polluted Bread upon my Altar, and ye say, Wherein have we polluted it? In that ye say, The Table of the Lord is contemptible: And if ye offer the blind for Sacrifice, Is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and the sick, Is it not evil? But cursed be the Deceiver that bath in his Flock a Male, and voweth, and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing; for I am a great King, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

The third Use is of Exhortation.

But again, The next Use I shall make of this Point, is for *Exhortation*, (in two Branches) and that to two sorts of persons.

First, Such as Preach the Gospel.

Secondly, To such who hear the Gospel preached.

The first Branch.

First, Let me presume to speak a few words to all such as fear the Lord, and preach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus; first, Be exhorted so to Preach;
or

or make manifest the Gospel, as it ought to be preached or made manifest, as *Paul* words it, *Col. 4. 3, 4.* Oh! as wise Preachers, and not unwise, seek and search after the mind of Christ, contained in the Proverbs, Problems, or Word of Christ. Oh! hunt as Hunts-men do for Game; follow it hard; and follow it close, through thick and through thin, through Bryars and through Thorns, as such who are resolved not to lose their time, and labour or desire, if it be possible. Even so let every wise Gospel-Preacher endeavour to preach the Gospel, as striving not to lose his labour; so Preaching, that he may reap the Harvest or Blessing of his preaching; and not onely preach, but so preach, as every wise Preacher ought to preach; not only unto men, or unto mens ears, but unto mens ears, and into mens hearts also, if possible. Thus *Paul* preached to the *Galatians*, travelling in Soul for the good of their Souls, until Christ was formed in them.

Oh Beloved! study not only to preach Notions unto the People, so much as to preach Motions into the People, that Christ may be formed in them. Oh! study Soul-convincing, and Soul-converting Doctrine, striving and designing that all your Hearers may be delivered into the form of that Doctrine, which from Christ, by you, is to them delivered. Oh! this will cause you, not only to have matter of Peace, but of Joy and Thanksgiving also with *Paul*, *Rom. 6. 17.* It is easier to seek out, and find out a Sermon to preach unto the People, than to find out this skill and wisdom, how to be able to distil or preach a Sermon into the People; for if God, that gives us a Door, yea, an open

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open Door of Utterance unto the People, do not also graciously give us a Door, an open Door of Entrance into the People; also our Preaching will be vain and lost Preaching, as to the People to whom we Preach; no good will be done, the People will be undone rather by us, for the better the Preacher is, and the more he preaches, and the People not the better, but the worse; the more dangerous is that peoples case and condition; and the greater will be their damnation. *Wo to thee Capernaum, which art exalted to Heaven, thou shalt be brought down to Hell; For if the mighty Works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained till this day: But I say, It shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom, in the Day of Judgment, than for thee,* Mat. 11. 23. 24. Oh therefore, as the High Priests of old bare the Children of Israels Names upon their Breasts, even so let all wise Preachers carry their Hearers upon their Hearts, that God would make their labour of love useful, and not a favour of death unto death, unto any of them.

But again, Let me perswade and exhort such as Preach, to seek that they may first be preached to, and that doubly.

Get thy Soul, first, preached into Christ, before ever thou goest to preach Christ unto any.

Secondly, Get the mind of Christ preached unto thy Soul, before thou goest about to preach the mind of Christ to any Soul; remembering what is written, *How can they preach except they be sent?* Rom. 10. 15. Oh Preachers! seek before ever, or whensoever you go to preach to others, to get Christ to preach forth his blessed Truth; to the
which

which he would that day have preached forth by thee to others : For how can one receive any thing, except it be given him from Above, or from Heaven, *Joh. 3. 27.* Oh seek, and search out diligently what Message is most meet for the People; and what Message Christ would have thee now hand forth to the People ; for 'tis not every Message, but present Message, is a meet Message to be delivered to the People: This we have hinted in the Description of the wise Scribe, that he *brings forth of his Treasury things new and old*, things lutable and necessary for present concernment, *Mat. 13. 52.* The Peoples present need, should be every wise Preacher's business to supply, and that in the first place. Oh search, as after the Peoples Lessons, so after the Peoples profiting; be not foolish Seedsmen as to sow your Seed, yea, Christ's principal immortal Seed of the Word, and never look after it; be not like the World's Sons of *Levi*, that only preach, to preach themselves into the People, and the Peoples Money into their Pockets; and having performed as much of this as Law requires, and will effect their end, they never care what becomes of their preaching. Oh, pray over your preaching, yea, pray after your preaching, that God would bless your preaching; and add the upper, as the nether Springs to your preaching, and not let you run and labour in vain. Search after the profiting of your Hearers, and see how the Seed sown makes increase, *in some thirty, in some sixty, in some an hundred fold*, Mark 4. 8.

But again, Let me once more *exhort* wise Preachers to seek out the deep things of God, contained in the Mysteries of the Gospel, or manifold wisdom of God. Oh ! be not blind Leaders of the

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blind World, lest you and they fall into the Ditch; search and study the Scriptures, which are able to make the Preacher, or the Man of God, perfect, or thoroughly furnished unto preaching. Knowledge, Gospel-Knowledge, is deep Waters: Apply your diligence to draw it out of the Wells of Salvation.

But lastly, Suffer me to add one word of *Exhortation* more; Search and see there be no root of Gall or Wormwood springing up to trouble you in your Work; I mean, see that the mouths of gain-sayers, and such as oppose your preaching, or slander your good Conversation, be silenc'd, that they which speak evil of you may be ashamed. The better and more wisely any Preacher preaches, the more will be his opposition, and therefore his wisdom should be, to take away occasion from such as seek occasion, that they of the contrary part may be ashamed. Oh seek to preach preventingly, that whosoever be Hearers, they may not find any occasion against you, save onely in the matter of your God. Strive to countermine Satan and Sinners, that whilst you are sowing precious Seed, will not spare to sow the Tares. Therefore strive so to preach, as to leave them no place or advantage for the Tares; yea, seek especially so to preach, at the Children that come to you for Bread may not meet with Stones, or suppose you give them Serpents for Fishes; I mean, Fancies and Errors, instead of wholesome Food or Gospel-Truths. Oh! preach plainly, preach purely, preach powerfully, preach plentifully, preach wisely or warily, lest you offend one of those little Ones, or so much as give them any shew or appearance of exception or stumbling;

stumbling; nay, let them not have so much as subterfuge, evasion, shift, or project, to put by the force and scope of your preaching, or to hide themselves under from obeying the Truth; but let every Soul be without excuse in the day of Christ; and this is to be a wise Preacher, and to seek out and set in order many Proverbs and Parables. So much for this first Branch of the *Exhortation*.

The second Branch of Exhortation.

But secondly, Let me make from hence one word of *Exhortation* to such as are Hearers. If the Preachers must seek, hunt, and search after the mind of Christ to deliver it unto you, then do not you less, than seek, hunt and search after the comprehending and understanding what you hear. Take Christ's Coun'el, *Luk. 8. 18. Take heed therefore how you hear.* Oh! if Preachers must be wise Preachers, be not you foolish or unwise Hearers; if they must be painful and careful Preachers, be you not slothful careless Hearers; if they must be watchful Preachers, I pray be not you sleepy Hearers: For if they must give a severe account how they Preach, think not but you Hearers must give a strict account how you hear; for it is written, *God will deal with the Scholar as with the Master, Isa. 24. 2.*

Oh, my Beloved, did Preachers know truly and sufficiently the weight, want, and worth of preaching, they would doubtless take more heed how they preach; even so would you Hearers, did you but consider the worth, want, and necessity of preaching, you would be more attentive, watch-

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ful, thankful, constant, fruitful Hearers: As negligent, careless, idle Preachers little know, or consider the worth, or the price, or the misery of Souls which are lost for want of wise and careful preaching; no more do you idle, sleepy, forgetful, unfruitful Hearers, know or consider the worth or price of your immortal Souls, nor the danger of your eternal condition, if you obey not the Gospel.

Oh Beloved! take heed to your selves, and to your feet, when you go to Hearing; and if you have any respect for the Lord Jesus, value of the Gospel, love to your Preachers, or regard or pity to your own Souls, do not thus evilly requite the Lord, your Labourers, yea, your own Souls, as to be unworthy, careless, heedless, mindless, heartless, fruitless Hearers of the Gospel; which with so much wisdom and wariness ought to be preached to you. Should a most choice-Physician take pity of a poor dying Patient, and sit down, and turn over all his Experiences, and take the greatest care he can to consider his Patients condition, and prescribe a Porion most suitable, most safe and profitable for his Patient; and then his Patient should either refuse to accept it, and neglect to read it, and resolve never to improve it; would not you say, This was a most unwise, unworthy, and ungrateful Person, to deal thus unworthily with his loving Friend and faithful Physician. Oh my Beloved! know and consider this day, such, even such, are all such unwise, unworthy Hearers, as when their loving, wise, and faithful Preachers have been diligently examining and considering their Souls case and condition; and having soundly

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not only their Disease, but their infallible Remedy, when they come and bring it unto you by the preaching of the Gospel, and you Hearers, with one consent slight it and neglect it; one saying, He will not put himself or Family to the trouble to come out of doors to hear it; another, he will come, but 'tis to sleep; a third, but 'tis to carp and cavil at it through his own faults, and instead of watching his own heart, he watches for the Preachers halting; a fourth may come and hear, but carelessly, more minding his ease, and his dress, and his company, than the Sermon or his duty; a fifth may hear, but forget; a sixth, but not believe; but dispute what he hears; and a seventh, though he hears, and understands, and remembers, yet comes prepared and resolved to be Scepter-proof, and not obey what he hears, say the Preacher what he pleases.

Oh my Beloved! are not all these unthankful and unworthy Hearers of the Word, and such as give both God and Men occasion to be weary of them, and to shake off the dust of their feet against them, and say, Since by this doing you judge yourselves unworthy of the Gospel, *La, watinu muba Gentiles, Acts 13. 46.* I have done now with this Life, and shall conclude both this Doctrine and this Exhortation, with two Scriptures; one is that *James 1. 19,* (with an) *Wherefore, my beloved Brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; be doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own Souls, or your own selves.* The other passage is *Ephes. 5. 15, 16.* See then, I say, Preacher and Hearer, see to it, that you walk circum-

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speckly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the dayes are evil. Thus much for this particular.

I now proceed to the next, which are these,
And set in order many Proverbs or Parables.

These words contain another description of the wise Preacher's Work, that is, To endeavour to *set in order many Proverbs.*

Two things need a little clearing.

First, *What is meant by a Proverb.*

Secondly, *What it is to set Proverbs in order.*

Proverbs, I suppose, either are to be taken literally and strictly; or, secondly, more largely and figuratively. Litterally, by Proverbs, are intended any pithy, short, witty, or significant kind of Expression. Thus we have the word used, *Prov. 1. 6. To understand a Proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.* Proverbs, as strictly considered, are witty, wise, dark, and short Sayings; and if we look upon some few of these Preachers Proverbs, you shall find all this in them; as to instance *Chap. 20. 17. with vers. 30.* and a multitude besides. But although this Preacher's way and wisdom led him this way thus to declare his wisdom, and give forth himself; yet we must take heed of tying all Preachers to this way, or in this sense to speak, or give forth Proverbs; but to speak or set forth Proverbs in a more large and general signification; that is, wise Preachers should give forth wisdom and knowledge to the people, though not in the way or form of a Proverb strictly considered. He ought to make the People, with himself, to understand the Na-

ture;

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ture, Order, Sense, and right use of Divine-Things, Knowledge, or the Word of God; and this is that the wise Preacher here intends or speaks of; and this indeed is the Preacher's work and wisdom, to set forth the Proverbs of Scripture in order, or to unvail or declare their true Scope, Use, and Excellency.

The ninth Doctrine.

The observation we may hence learn, is, *That every wise competent Preacher, ought with all diligence endeavour to comprehend, and cause others to comprehend the Wisdom, Sense, and Order of the Scripture.* This is every Gospel-Preacher's Trade and Business.

Two Acts or Particulars the Doctrine includes.

First, *With Relation to the Preacher.*

Secondly *With reference to the Preacher's Charge or Flock.*

First; *In reference to himself:* He is most diligently to design and endeavour to understand and comprehend the Mind and Will of God contained in the Word. This is, To set Proverbs, or God's dark Sayings or Truths in order as to himself.

Secondly; *In reference unto the People:* His Duty, saith this Doctrine, is to help them to understand what he comprehends of the Proverbs of God, or meaning of the Scripture; for as he neither is a Preacher for himself, much less preaches to himself; no more ought he to know, understand, or comprehend the Proverbs or Mysteries of Truth for himself only, but for the People as well

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as for himself. That this is so, consider a few Scriptures, *Nehem.* 8. 7, 8. you shall find *Jeshua*, and *Bani*, and *Sherebiab*, *Jamin*, *Akkub*, *Shabbethai*, *Hodijab*, *Maafeiab*, *Kelita*, *Azariab*, *Jozabad*, *Hanan*, *Palaiab*, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their places: They read in the Book of the Law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. Here we have a large account of the Work and Design of wise Preachers, and good Ministers, it is to set Proverbs in order, or to clear and make known the sense of Scripture to the people; and *v.* 13. it is said, That the People rejoiced at this enjoyment.

But again, *Solomon* tells us, That the Wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, but the folly of fools is deceit, *Prov.* 14. 8. Whence mark, A wise or prudent Person, (such every Gospel-preacher ought to be) his work is to understand his way; that is, his way of preaching, how to give the true sense of God's Word to his People, that is, setting Proverbs in order; the contrary of this was that God complained of in the false Prophets, or foolish Preachers of *Israel*; saying, *His Watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb Dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber: Yea, they are greedy Dogs, which can never have enough, and they are Shepherds that cannot understand, &c.* *Isa.* 56. 10, 11. Mark it well, They are foolish Shepherds, or unwise Preachers, that cannot understand the Mind of the Lord, and know not how to set his Parables and Proverbs in order; the like you have *Jer.* 9. 12. *Who is the wise Man that may understand this? and who is he*

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to whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken that he may declare it? Take that of Prov. 22. where you have Solomon the wise Preacher both doing this Work, and teaching wise Preachers also to do this work, when he saith, *Have I not written unto thee excellent things in counsels and in knowledge, that I might make thee to know the certainty of the words of truth, that thou mightest answer the words of truth to those that send unto thee?* vers. 20. 21. also Chap. 10. 31, 32. *The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom, and the lips of the righteous knoweth what is acceptable.* Take that also of Luke 1. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and Ministers of the Word:* It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed. To name no more, take Paul's charge and direction to Timothy, *Till I come, give attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine; meditate on these things; give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all,* 1 Tim. 4. 13, 15. I should now give you the Reasons of the Point, I shall onely name them at present.

Reason 1.

First; Every wise Preacher should thus do, because this is no more than they all profess to do; and what men profess to do, that lawfully may be done,

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done, that they ought to do; therefore thus wise Preachers not only may, but must do.

Reason 2.

Secondly; This is that which wise and pious People warrantably promise themselves will be done for them, by such as preach to them; and therefore ought not to be denyed unto them, nor can without sin be with-held from them.

Reason 3.

Thirdly; If this be not done, how shall the People know what they have to do? how shall the People prepare themselves to duty, if duty be not made plain to them, or the Parable set in order before them? If Doctrine be not clear, Practice must be doubtful; as *Paul* expresseth, *If the Trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the Battel?* 1 Cor. 14. 8.

Reason 4.

Fourthly; If Preachers do not make it their business to set Proverbs, or God's Word, in order, or in due order; nothing is more certain than this, That they will set them out of order: but let such that so do, think of that passage, what the Lord said to *Eliphaz the Temanite*, *My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two Friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right*, Job 42. 7. Oh, what a dreadful thing is it for God to be angry with a Preacher; view that of *Numb.* 10. 1, 2. with that of *2 Sam.* 6. 7.

Reason 5.

Lastly; This is that which wise Preachers may do, if they will but spiritually make it their business so to do, and therefore are without all excuse if this they do not; for it is written, *He maketh his Ministers a flame of fire*, Heb. 1. 7. But

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But I told you, I should only name the *Reasons* and come to *Application*; in the which I shall also be the briefer, because I have formerly had occasion, as you may remember, to speak to the substance of this *Doctrine*; all I intend, I shall comprize in a few serious words of *Exhortation* to all that are, or would be esteemed wise and Gospel-Preachers.

Use of Exhortation.

Oh, let such remember, and never forget, it is their Duty and Business to set God's *Proverbs* in order; that is, in God's, or Gospel-order, that he that runs may read the Visions of God in the Scripture. Oh, let us not be like the foolish Preachers which the Lord reproveth by the Prophet, saying, *Seemeth it a small thing to you, to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? And as for my flock, they eat that which you have troden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet. Therefore, behold, saith the Lord, I will judge you,* Ezek. 34. 18, 19, 20.

I beseech you, dear Brethren, let it be our Work and Business to do what the Prophet was commanded to do, when the Lord answered and said, *Write the Vision, and make it plain upon Tables; that he that cannot read it, may read it,* Habak. 2. 2. Oh, let it be our main business, not onely to know that the Lord hath *Proverbs*, and that our Lord Jesus spake nothing without a Parable, *Mat. 13. 34.* that is, little without a Parable: I say, This
is

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is not so much our business, as to comprehend and understand how to set these Parables in order, in due order, in their own order. Oh, this is necessary and becoming wise Preachers thus to do, and not to set Proverbs out of order, into their own or other mens order, labouring more in Preaching to keep close to their own or other mens sense and order in opening the Scripture, than unto Christs and the Scriptures order. It matters not what Commentary, or Comment, or, we decline or contradict, so we honorize the Scripture, and agree with the Original, Sense, and Scope thereof. Let such as preach, and would preach wisely and approvedly, be fast to the Sense and Interpretation of Text, as well as Observation or Application of Text. For how can the Observation be true or natural, or the Application forcible and strong, if the Interpretation be wrong? Oh, take heed of wronging Proverbs, by knocking Proverbs, even Gods Proverbs, out of order; and lie, and say not the truth, when you say, the Lord saith it, or the Lord's Word teacheth it; and the Lord hath not said it, neither doth his Word teach it. Oh, think frequently of that word, *Behold I am against the Prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, The Lord saith it.* Jer. 23: 31. Think it not wisdom or excellency, to darken, veil, or obscure the Scripture, or the Proverbs thereof; but to unvail or enlighten the Scripture; that is, make its real Light appear: lest by so doing, we not only contract to our selves our own, but the sins of other men also, even the sin and right to the punishment of as many as have received and believed our dreams for the Visions of the

the Lord. 'Tis more than we can well bear, our own guilt, and the chastisements of our own sins and errors: But O! how intolerable and heavy may it prove to us, to bear the guilt or punishment of the many deceived and corrupted by us. The greatest of Preachers and Writers, without conformity to this Doctrine, lie in greatest danger, as being the greatest of Deceivers.

But I shall say no more to this *Use* or *Doctrine*, save only a closing word, because I am speaking to the wise, and *a word to the wise may suffice*: and truly such as are otherwise, 'tis not the many words will do any good, as *Solomon* tells us; *Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him*, Prov. 27. 22. Wherefore, my Brethren, let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you, *Philippians* 3. 15. And so I come to the next verse, or next words of the Text; though I might offer another Observation from the number of Proverbs, *the wise Preacher set in order*; 'tis many, or the All of the many Proverbs that are in the Scripture.

We might note, Wise Preachers are fruitful Preachers, not barren, lean, or dry Preachers, that can onely interpret some one or other single Proverb; but can set in order the many or manifold Proverbs in the Scripture; but I shall rather proceed and hasten to a close.

As this Scripture is Prophetical, and looks towards the truly wise, or transcendently wise Preacher, our Lord Jesus, that greater than *Solomon*, we

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we might note divers things, but this I now shall want time for ; you find in *vers. 10. The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words ; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.*

In general, This Verse gives us account of what the Preacher sought, even *acceptable words* ; and this is the second thing he sought, as this verse compared with the former acquaints us.

But more particularly, In the Verse we have two things.

First ; An account of what the Preacher sought to find out, even *acceptable words*.

Secondly ; The excellency or property of those *acceptable words*, in these words, and that which was written, *was upright, even words of truth*, or according to truth ; not only upright, but also words of truth.

To begin with the first of these ; *The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words*. This is every wise Preacher's Work, to seek how to find out *acceptable words*, or how to make his words acceptable.

For the improvement of these words, one question is necessary to be resolved, to wit, *What acceptable words are, or such acceptable words are which Preachers ought to seek out ?*

I Answer ; First, Negatively, Not flattering words, or deceitful words, though sometimes such words Preachers seek out, and the People account them acceptable ; as in that passage of the false Prophets, who knowing the affection of the King to be for War, finds out acceptable, but deceitful words ; who said, with one consent, *Go up. for the Lord shall deliver it into the hands of the King,*
1 Kings

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1 Kings 22. 6. But you find these were neither upright words, nor words of truth, but of deceit and falshood, as the consequent declared it; but the words the wise Preacher sought to find out, as acceptable to the People, were upright, *even words of truth.*

But secondly, Affirmatively; I say, *Acceptable words*, which wise Preachers should or do seek to find out, are words meet to be accepted from him that preaches, by them to whom he preaches; and so is every word of truth in the general, though some words more especially; as *Paul* implies in that expression, *This is a saying worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the World to save sinners, of whom I am chief,* 1 Tim. 1. 15.

Thirdly, *Acceptable words*, imply words which God accepts, and therefore should be acceptable with the People; Though the People do not accept them, yet they may be accepted of God. Such were *Micaiab's* words to the King, when he said, *I saw all Israel scattered upon the Hills, as Sheep that have no Shepherd; and the Lord said, These have no Master; let them return every man to his House in peace,* 1 Kings 22. 17.

Fourthly, *Acceptable words*, imply sometimes such words as are not only words of truth in themselves, and so acceptable to God, but words accepted with the People, and so acceptable in all respects. Such were *Philip's* words to the Eunuch, *If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest,* Acts 8. 37. The former of these cannot be wanting in an acceptable word, the latter may, and yet the words be acceptable; as in that of *Jeremiab*, when he told the King of *Judab*, *Behold, Pharaohs Army*

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Army which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own Land, and the Caldeans shall come again, and fight against this City, and take it, and burn it with fire, Jer. 37. 7, 8. But though these words were acceptable, or truth in themselves, and so to the Lord, and should have been so to them, as being profitable to them: Yet for all this they were unacceptable to them, as is manifest vers. 15. Wherefore the Princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in Prison.

This may suffice for the Answer of this great Question, *What acceptable words are?* Let me now raise this Observation or Conclusion.

The tenth Doctrine.

That the wisdom and work of wise Preachers, is, and ought to be, to preach acceptable words, or acceptably.

I shall the briefer pass through this Doctrine, because I have had occasion already to speak to the main things in it contained. Wherefore for the proof of what hath been asserted, to wit, That every wise Preacher's wisdom and work, is to preach *acceptable words*, or acceptably; Consider, This is *Paul's* charge, not to *Timothy* only, but in him to all Preachers, to preach *acceptable words*, as you have it in the following words of the Text, *words of Truth: Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard from me, 2 Tim. 1. 13. So to Titus, speaking what Preachers or Elders of Churches should be, he saith, They should be men able, by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince gain-sayers, Tit. 1. 9. so Chap. 2. 1. Speak thou*
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the thing which becometh sound Doctrine ; and once more you have it given in charge among other Directions, Sound speech that cannot be condemned ; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you, vers. 8. And this Paul begs the Prayers of Saints to God for him in this behalf, That he might not only Speak, or Preach, but so Speak or Preach as he ought to do, Ephes. 6. 20. with Col. 4. 4.

But may not some say ; *How doth it appear all this while, that preaching sound words, is preaching acceptable words ?*

However I shall grant, That to unsound hearts, unsound words are and may be most acceptable, as we read where the People spake to the Prophet, saying, *Prophecie not unto us right things ; speak unto us smooth things, prophecie deceits, Isa. 30. 10.* Yet sound Hearts, or gracious Hearers, they count no words acceptably spoken, or worthy their acceptation, but sound and wholesome words ; as we read of the Church of *Ephesus*, that they hated the Deeds, or the Doctrine of the *Nicholaitans*, which the Lord also hated, *Rev. 2. 6.*

In the opening of this term, *acceptable words*, I told you it implied *words of truth* ; which, and which only, ought of honest and wise Hearers to be accepted. Therefore to preach sound words, or words of Truth, is to preach *acceptable words* ; being such words which only should be preached, and are alwayes worthy of all mens acceptation. And doubtless, this among other things *Paul* also intended in that phrase, *to speak as he ought* ; that is, only and alwayes Truth, or the lively Oracles of God ; not but that Preachers have other

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things

things to mind, that their words may be *acceptable words*.

So, secondly; Seasonable words are, or ought to be accounted *acceptable words*: Therefore Solomon, speaking of seasonable words, saith, *A word spoken in due season, how good is it?* or, how acceptable is it? *Prov. 15. 23.* Now, a word may be fitly said to be seasonable or seasonably spoken, either in reference to God's account, or the peoples concerns. First, In reference to God's, when God's Cause and Honour calls for our speaking, then to speak such words as may most conduce to the Cause and Case in hand, is to speak acceptable or seasonable words, such as wise Preachers ought to seek out, & speak out. Such were *Mordecai's* words to *Hester*, when he declared to her the state of the *Jews*, and charged her, *That she should go in unto the King to make supplication to him, and to make request before him for her People*, Chap. 4. 8. And when she seems to be backward to entertain these words, *vers. 10, 11.* *Mordecai* doubles former seasonable words, as becomes wise Preachers so to do, and tells her, *Think not that thou shalt escape in the Kings House, more than all the Jews: For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall their enlargement arise from another place, but thou and thy Fathers House shall be destroyed*, *vers. 13, 14.* The like seasonable were the words of *Elijah*, both to the King and to the People, when he told the King, *I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy Fathers House, in that ye have forsaken the Commandments of the Lord, and ye have followed Baalim; and to the People, when he said, How long halt ye between two Opinions? If the*
Lord

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Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him, 1 Kings 18. 18, 21. And such were Paul's words to the *Athenians*, when he saw them so given to Idolatry, *Acts* 17. 16, to the close of that Chapter.

And by the way note, That oft-times God, in a wonderful manner, stirs up the Spirits of his Servants to be speaking such acceptable words as are timely and most seasonable, in order to present work, as in the instances cited, with many more may easily appear.

But secondly, Words may then be counted seasonable and acceptable, when most suitable to, or suiting with the Peoples present Case, State, and Necessities. The work of wise Preachers should be, to tune their words to such occasions, when a People are secure, settled in sin and sinful wayes; then awakening, quickning, reprovings words are most seasonable, and to God most acceptable when spoken, and should be so to the People. Such were *John's* words to the sinful *Jews*, when he saw many of the *Pharisees* and *Sadduces* come to his Baptism, he said unto them, *O generation of Vipers, who hath warned you to fly from the wrath to come? bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance; and think not to say within your selves, We have Abraham to our Father.* When the Peoples case is trouble and sorrow for sin, then comforting words are seasonable and acceptable words. This the Lord himself teacheth, saying, *Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished,* *Ila.* 40. 1, 2. And in obedience hereunto, when *Peter* saw that the People were pricked at their hearts, he said unto them,

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Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is to you, and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, Acts 2. 38, 39. When the People are ignorant of Truths necessary, or in some sense of necessity to be at present known; Now 'tis wise Preachers work, to seek out seasonable and acceptable words of information, for the removing the peoples ignorance. Thus *Peter* did in that fore-cited *Acts 2. 14, 15.* And thus did those wise ones *Aquila* and *Priscilla* deal with *Apollos*, *Acts 18. 24, 25, 26.*

To name no more Instances of this kind, When words may truly be seasonable and acceptable, or both; I say, when we see the Peoples sin openly, and dangerous to the insnaring and indangering of others, then 'tis most seasonable to step in with reproving words. Thus *Paul* dealt with *Peter*, *Gal. 2. 12, 13, 14.* And with the same spirit we find him acting against *Elimas* the Sorcerer, when he sought to turn away the Deputy from the Faith, *Acts 13. 9, 10, 11.*

Thus much may suffice for the proving and opening the Point; let me now give you two or three Reasons or Arguments why this must needs be a Truth.

Reason 1.

First; Because 'tis then only, Preachers can be said in preaching to preach, or in doing the work of preaching to preach, when we preach acceptably, or speak seasonable words. All other preaching is foolish preaching, or for the present but lost preaching. But again;

Reason

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Reason 2.

Secondly; Such Preachers and Preaching, are only acceptable to God, as such only should be to wise Hearers, as the Lord seems to imply in that expression of the Prophet, *He that hath a Dream, let him tell a Dream; and he that hath my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully. What is the Chaff to the Wheat? saith the Lord, Jer. 23. 28.*

Reason 3.

Lastly; Preachers ought to seek out *acceptable words*, because such preaching will only answer our engagements and pretensions both to God and Man: Our engagement, who preach, is like our Lord Christ, who said, *I came from Heaven, not to do my own Will, but the Will of him that sent me, John 6. 38.* And no Preacher is so foolish or unwise a Preacher, as to pretend less than thus to do; wherefore let as many as preach be so wise and honest to do what they pretend to do, and as *Paul* saith, *Not to preach themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and themselves Servants for Jesus sake, 2 Cor. 4. 5.*

I proceed now to the *Application*, because I promised to be short.

Use of Reproof.

The first Use may be for a word of *Reproof* to as many Preachers that are not so wise as to make this their work, to seek out acceptable seasonable words, even sound words, or words of truth and uprightness. Oh, how many foolish, careless, and unconscionable Preachers there are, that nei-

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ther study the Scriptures to find out sound words, nor consult with God, or with the People, to know what may be an acceptable word, or a word spoken in due season, either in reference to what God is a doing, or the People are wanting in. These may more aptly be stiled foolish than wise Preachers, who more study humane than divine Writ; and consult the mind of men, especially great men, rather than the mind of God; and their own gain and interest, more than the Peoples profit.

All I shall further say to these is, As their sin is great against God and the Souls of the People; even so, without repentance, and more wisdom, their judgment will be heavy, and their damnation slumbers not. Let such think seriously of that saying of *Peter*, *But these, as natural brut beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption*, 2 Pet. 2. 12. But to be brief.

Secondly, For Exhortation.

Secondly, This shall serve for a word of *Exhortation*, and that to two sorts of Persons.

First; To such as Preach.

Secondly; To such as Hear.

First; Let me exhort and provoke all you that are wise Gospel-Preachers, to remember this word, *Seek out acceptable words, even words of Truth*; and let that which is written be upright. Oh, suffer me to beseech you to seek out seasonable words, both upon God's and his Peoples account. Oh, consider what Generation-work God hath in hand

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hand in your day, in the present day, and give it your word, as *Nehemiah* did in his day, *Chap. 2. vers. 3.* In times of abounding of iniquity, *Lift up thy Voice like a Trumpet, cry aloud, spare not, shew the people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sin, Isa. 58. 1.* And take that encouraging word and charge you have given to the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Thou therefore gird up thy loyns, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee, and be not dismayed at their faces, Jer. 1. 17.* Oh, my Brethren, be prevailed upon to make it your main business, next to the looking after your own Vines, to look after *acceptable words* for the People. Oh, search out the cause you know not, and see what your and Christ's Sheep want, and Preach words seasonable, or in due season. Oh Beloved, be not knowers but doers of the Word, not deceiving your own Souls: This will bring much honour to Christ, and you will then so do your work, as to have joy, and not grief, in the great day of Jesus Christ.

Secondly; Let me exhort you that are Hearers, to suffer a word of Exhortation, not onely from me, but from your Preachers also, which enjoy wise and painful Preachers, that make it their business to seek out *acceptable words* for you. Oh, esteem such highly for their work sake, and their work for Christ's sake. Oh, slight not such words as cost them so dear, or so much, to find out for your use. Oh, sin not against such words as are seasonable, and should be to you acceptable. Suffer your Preachers to deal home and plainly with you; 'tis their duty, and their love to Christ and you, make their work easie; take their labour of

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love kindly, despise not, pervert not prophesyings of such as seek out *acceptable words*; and what-ever they speak is words of Truth, and of uprightness. If necessity be laid upon them to seek out *acceptable words*, do not think you are at liberty, whether you will receive or refuse them. Nay, think of that dreadful word, *Lo, when this cometh to pass, then shall they know that a Prophet hath been among you*, Ezek. 33. 33. The great God that made nothing in vain, hath not made wise Preachers in vain, or that you should turn a deaf ear, or a rebellious heart towards them. They must sift, hunt, and search out *acceptable words* for you; and you ought to receive them with all readiness of mind, and take heed that they lose not through you the things which they have wrought. Oh believe it, your spiritual wise Preachers do bring you *acceptable words*, *meat in due season*, and therefore let him that hath ears, hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches.

And lastly; If Preachers must seek out *acceptable words* for the People, then let their *acceptable words* be acceptably entertained of you: As Daniel said to the King, so let me say to all you to whom this Truth shall come, *Let my Counsel be acceptable to you, and break off your sins by Righteousness, and your iniquities by shewing of mercy*, Dan. 4. 27. I mean, your sins against wise Preachers, and their *acceptable words* from Jesus Christ.

~~Thus~~ Thus much for this Word and this Point. I proceed now from the Preacher's Work to the Preacher's Commendation; *And that which was written was upright, even words of Truth.*

The eleventh Doctrine.

Whence I might observe, *That as wise Preachers are wary and painful Preachers, and search and seek out acceptable and seasonable words for their People; so a pious and deserving People will not be wanting to give, or afford them and their preaching, due and deserved encouragement and commendation, as might easily be made to appear.*

But remembering what Solomon the Preacher hath writ in this case, *Prov. 27. 2. Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.*

I shall forbear to proceed any further, and shall now consider the words, without relation to the Preacher, as they hint forth the commendation of uprightness and truth, not only in the Preacher's Spirit and Work, but in every Man's Spirit and Conversation.

The twelfth Doctrine.

And the Observation may be this, *That a Spirit of Truth and uprightness, is an excellent frame of Spirit in all that profess the Name of Christ.*

I shall not need to spend time about the opening or discovering what Truth and Uprightness is, because among such who enjoy wise Preachers, this is much discoursed of amongst wise and gracious Persons; this is well known, if not better known than practised. Therefore I shall briefly give you the proofs of the Point, and then come to improve it.

That

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That this frame of Spirit and walking is lovely and excellent, take the witness of a stranger in Israel concerning David, when he told him, *Surely as the Lord liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out, and thy coming in with me in the Host, is good in my sight; for I have not found evil in thee, since the day of thy coming unto me, to this day,* 1 Sam. 29. 6. Take also David's own testimony, when he sings forth the excellency of his Spirit, saying, *I was also upright before him, and have kept my self from mine iniquity,* 2 Sam. 22. 24. But setting aside Man's testimony to this Truth, take the Lord's own testimony concerning Job; *And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my Servant Job? there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man,* Chap. 1. 8. The like honourable acknowledgement doth our Lord give of Nathaniel, saying, *Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile,* John 1. 47. And Solomon tells us, *Such as are upright in their way, are the Lord's delight,* or his delightful ones, Prov. 11. 20.

But this may suffice for the proof of the Point, though manifold Texts might have been produced for the further demonstrating this, had it been necessary.

Let me now give you some *Arguments* to clear this Observation, *That truth and uprightness in the Spirit, renders such Spirits excellent.*

Argument 1.

First; Because this is the frame of God's Spirit or Being, therefore to be like God in being, must needs render us excellent in being. That God is thus in his Being, take that saying for it, *Good*
and

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and upright is the Lord, Psal. 25. 8. Also that of *Isaiab*, *Oh, thou most upright, dost weigh the path of the Just*, Isa. 26. 7. Now to have our Spirits according to the frame of God's Spirit, is the most excellent frame that can be imagined. But again;

Argument 2.

Secondly; This must needs be a most excellent frame, because the contrary frame of Spirit is the most dishonourable and unlovely frame that can be. 'Tis said of Satan, *That he is transformed into an Angel of Light*: This is the emphasis or height of his iniquity, he is not upright, he is not as he seems to be, he is really an Angel of darkness, and pretends to be an Angel of Light, 2 Cor. 11. 14. Therefore when our Lord would set forth the vileness and unworthiness of the Spirit of the *Jews*, he tells them, *They are of their Father the Devil, and the lusts of your Father you will do*, John 8. 44. And no Spirit is so disowned and detested of God, as the Spirit of Hypocrisie; *Woe unto Hypocrites*, Math. 23. 27. read that place at your leisure. Therefore to be of the contrary Spirit to Hypocrisie, must needs be excellent; that is, to be upright in Spirit. But again;

Argument 3.

Thirdly; 'Tis that frame begun in us here, which will be our frame perfectly in the state of Glory. Now to be in such a frame here, as we shall be in glory, must needs be a glorious and excellent frame. When the Disciples saw Christ transfigured, *That his Face did shine as the Sun, and his Rayment was white as the Light*, Mat. 17. 2. Even so, how glorious are such Souls as are transfigured

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figured into the Image of Christ, even this image of Truth, and uprightness of Spirit? Such are the most excellent in their Generation. But again;

Argument 4.

Lastly; This can be no other than a Truth, which both Heaven and Earth bear witness to; but that this is excellent, even truth and uprightness, in whom-soever it be found, we have heard the testimony of Heaven and of the Scripture; and if we enquire of all sorts of men under the Heavens, they will all seal to this Truth, that Men and Women, of honest Spirits, are most desirable and excellent Persons both to dwell with and converse with.

Therefore seeing this Doctrine knows no Adversaries as to the acknowledgment thereof, I shall cease any further demonstration, and come to *Application*; wherein I shall speak some-thing by way of *Information*, some-thing of *Exhortation*, and then give some *Motives*.

Use of Information.

The first Use I shall make of this Point, is to present you with a word of *Information*, and that is, Whence it comes to pass that the Preachers and People of the Lord are no more valued and esteemed than they are this day? 'Tis, because they have no more of this excellent Spirit in them, this Spirit of Truth and of Uprightness. I do not say this is the only reason, or that there is no other reason, but I say it again, amongst other Reasons, this is one grand one: They say, Professors want Truth
and

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and Uprightness; talk of Heaven, and of Love, and of Bounty and Patience, yet love the World, and pursue the World, and keep the World as much as any; love few but themselves, and Men of their own Principles, judging all that believe not as they believe, and practise as they practise. They are as miserable and impatient, or forward upon every slight occasion, as any other men. Therefore men are apt to think that all is not true they say, and that they speak not as they think, but are deceitful, meer words and shews. Oh my dear Friends! I wish that this were altogether groundless, and that there were not too much truth or ground for this complaint.

But Sirs, take notice how the want of visibility and activity in this frame of Spirit, causeth our good commodity to be evil spoken of; therefore let it be our wisdom and business, to take away occasion from them that seek occasion, and take heed that we open not the mouths of the uncircumcised *Philistines*, to rejoyce or blaspheme. Let Professors know what they can, and talk what they will, 'twil signifie little, unless they walk also in this Spirit of Truth and Uprightness.

Use of Exhortation.

But secondly, and especially, Let this be matter of *Exhortation* to us all, even as many as fear the Lord, both Preachers and Hearers, to labour for, and walk in a Spirit of Truth and Uprightness. This we have seen is a most excellent choice frame of Spirit, in the esteem both of God and Man. Oh therefore, labour to attain such a frame of Spirit;
For

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For naturally our Spirits are otherwise in the frames of them; for what the Prophet once said, is still truth, *Everyone is an hypocrite, and an evil doer, and every mouth speaketh folly or falsehood*, Isa. 9. 17. 'Tis Mortification of earthly Members, and Sanctification of the Spirit, must make us Men or Women of this frame of Spirit; for naturally we are born of another temper, and you who know what Mortification is, know it is not easie work to mortifie the deeds of the flesh; but be it what it may be, yet be prevealed upon, in the fear of the Lord, to set upon this duty, even to get our Spirits into this frame, even into this good frame; and if it will cost us the plucking out of our right eyes, or cutting off our right hands, yet subscribe to it.

And first, Let me freely tender this word of *Exhortation* to us that are Preachers, and should be wise Preachers, seeking out *acceptable words*; and that which by us is at any time preached and written upon the heart of the People, should be upright, *even words of truth*. Let us be a living Word, as well as a speaking Word; let our lips and our lives joyn together, and speak one thing, even Holiness to *Jehovah*. Oh, let not us reprove sin in others, and allow or indulge it in our selves. What is that but down-right dissimulation? Oh, let us not commend Patience, and be impatient; and Humility, and be Sons of Pride our selves. This is not to walk with the foot of uprightness according to the Gospel; This is not to be a wise, but an unwise Preacher, if not a proud *Pharisee*, and a very Hypocrite. Wherefore, if a Preacher, be under such temptations; as to pretend
Christ,

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Christ, and preach Self; and to seek Christ, and seek mostly Self; as to cry down all sin, and yet live in cry'd down sins; to commend Grace and Vertue, and yet live short in Grace, and empty of Virtue; placing thy excellency and piety in seeming so, and saying so, and in washing the out-side, neglecting the inside; make broad the Phylacteries, and enlarging the borders of your Garments, that is, in using singular or peculiar restraints, and modes of Gesture and Vesture, from other sober and pious Persons. Oh, know'tis not marring of our Beards or Locks, and having our Cloaks long, and our Girdles strait, that can or will prove us wise Preachers, or men of this excellent Spirit of Uprightness and Truth. Oh no! we may be Fools and Hypocrites for all this; and therefore it nearly stands us upon to do as that great Preacher and Apostle of the Gentiles did; *Even to keep under (or beat black and blew) our body, and bring it into subjection, lest (O mark it) that by any means, when I have preached to others, I my self should be a cast-away,* 1 Cor. 9. 27. And answer all temptations to contrary-mindedness or contrary-spiritedness to this Doctrine and frame of Spirit, as good *Nehemiah* did, saying, *Shall such a man as I flee? Who being as I am, would desist?* Chap. 6. 11. So let us. Who that is as I am, a Man, Ah more than a Man, a Christian; yea more than a Christian, a Preacher to Christians, that would seek great things for himself, under pretence of seeking great things for Christ? Oh, who that were a Preacher as I, and preached down Covetousness, Idleness, Earthly-mindedness in others, would live in these things himself? Oh no, my Soul,

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Soul, I will not, I dare not, lest I be not found a wise, but an unwise Preacher, and that which by me is written or preached, be not words of Truth and Uprightness. And in the Close, what-ever I may be to others, I be to my self a cast-away. O therefore, let Preachers especially receive and improve this *Exhortation*, and see that *our conversation be only as becometh the Gospel*, Phil. 1. 27. And to close up this Head of *Exhortation*, Let as many as are and would be found wise Preachers, be perswaded to think often and deeply of that Scripture, 2 Cor. 4. *Therefore, seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy, we faint not, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending our selves to every man's Conscience in the sight of God.*

Having thus tendred my Mite to Preachers, let me now be your Exhorter that are Hearers; Men and Women fearing the Lord, Oh, let this be your frame of Spirit, be like your Father Jacob, of a plain Spirit; who hath his commendation in his youth, that he *was a plain man*, Gen. 25. 27. Oh, such let us that fear the Lord be, let our inside be manifest by our out-side; let our Words and our Works agree; our professions both to God and Man, and our performances agree and correspond together; let our Light and our Life agree, our publick and private walking agree; so shewing forth, that we are *Israelites* indeed, in whom there is no guile. Even the *Epistle of Christ*, written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in Tables of Stone, but in fleshy Tables
of

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of the heart, as we have it 2 Cor. 3. 3. Oh, 'tis living forth this Doctrine, will speak us forth clearly to be Christians, or the Epistles of Christ, when we have such frames of Spirit as are thoroughly seasoned with Uprightness and Truth. Christians, look to your frame of Spirit; Hypocrites can look to their Words and Speeches. Look you to your Hearts, good Words and good Works Hypocrites have for God; 'tis Saints onely have good Hearts for God. Oh, look well to your Spirits, how the frame stands bent, whether for Truth and Uprightness, or for Falshood and Hypocrisie; and forget not that word *Mal. 2. 15. Take heed to your Spirits*: Oh, dress your Spirits with Truth and Uprightness, for the dress of the Soul goes further with God, than all the dresses of the Body with men can do; as *Peter* informs us, where he advises Women, *Not to let their adorning be outward adorning, but let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price, 1 Pet. 3. 3, 4.* Oh my Brethren, look mostly after the dress and adorning of your Spirits, for God is not only a Spirit, but converseth most with the Spirits, and most delights in the well ordering and composure of the Spirit. Wherefore seeing the delight and sacrifice of God, is a broken and a contrite Spirit; give unto God a plain Spirit of Truth and Uprightness, knowing that our God loves Uprightness.

And to quicken us to the acceptance of this Exhortation, let me give you and my self a few Motives and Encouragements to induce us to be of this blessed frame of Spirit.

N

Motive

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Motive 1.

First ; This is the ready way to have God manifest his love abundantly to us, when he finds such a frame of Spirit in us, as we have it *Psal. 11. 7. For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his Countenance doth behold the upright* ; that is, favorably, or as one that God loves and respects. Oh, with what favorable respect did God behold upright *Abraham*, and upright *Job*, not only to approve them, but also to reward them or privilege them ; as we find in that story of *Abraham's* offering up of *Isaac* ; whereby was manifested his uprightness, and God acknowledges it *Gen. 22. 12.* And when God saw that *Abraham* had such a frame of Spirit, God doth not only give him his *Isaac* from the dead, but tells him also, *By my self have I sworn, saith the Lord ; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not with-held thy Son, thine only Son, thine Isaac, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy Seed as the Stars of Heaven, and as the Sand that is upon the Sea-shore ; and thy Seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, vers. 16, 17.* And lest this should not be enough, hear further what God promises him in the next Verse, saying, *In thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed* ; and all, because he was upright, and in uprightness obeyed the Voice of God. Oh, see what favour God bears to upright Men and Women, as in *Job*, and *David*, and *Paul*, and others, might be largely manifested.

Secondly ; Consider, this is an encouragement, or an heart-strengthening frame of Spirit. Oh, how wonderfully will uprightness strengthen unto Truth ;

Truth; according to that of *Solomon*, *The Lord is strength to the upright*, Prov. 10. 29. How did *Daniel's* uprightness give him humble and holy boldness in the day of his trouble? as appears by his expression to the King, *Then said Daniel unto the King, Live for ever; my God hath sent his Angels; and hath shut the Lyons mouths that they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me, and also before thee have I done no hurt*, Dan. 6. 21, 22. But on the contrary, How does the want of uprightness cause heart-trembling and weakness? as you may see in that story of *Haman*, *Hest.* 7. 6, 7, 8. Oh therefore, get and maintain such a frame of Spirit, as will cause and maintain in our Soul, a truly well-grounded confidence and boldness to look God and Man in the face withal, without blushing in any season. But again;

Thirdly; To move us to make it our business to get and maintain our Spirits in such a frame; consider, 'Tis a frame so desirable and lovely, that not only God and all good men love this frame of heart, but all men, even the vilest of men, approve of this in others, though they may be wanting in it themselves; and this is the Apostles Argument, *Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things*, Phil. 4. 8. But again;

Fourthly; Take this for encouragement towards pressing after such a frame of Spirit: A deceitful Spirit is a vain Spirit, that goes about to deceive, or

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go beyond God or Man, by fraudes, by guiles, and deceits ; nay, deceives himself ; 'tis like cloathing our selves with Fig-leaves, or hiding our heads under the Spider's Web ; *'tis vain work*, as the Lord tells us, *Isa. 29. 15, 16, 17. There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall not be known*, *Mat. 10. 26. For the folly of fools is deceit*, *Prov. 14. 8. For their folly shall be made manifest to all men*, *2 Tim. 3. 9.*

Fifthly, and lastly ; To hasten, consider but the danger of a contrary frame of Spirit to this Doctrine ; and if former *Motives* cannot induce and move us to this frame, yet peradventure this lower *Motive* of self-conveniency and concernment may. Though God is a resolved enemy against all sorts of sin and sinners, yet especially is he resolved to shew himself most quick and severe against persons of this frame. God hath said it, and will make it good ; *Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their dayes*, *Psal. 53. 23.* Hypocrites, of all men, must have their woes, and no portion of woe is sufficient for their punishment short of the Devils, weeping and gnashing of teeth, which must be the portion of Devils, and of Hypocrites, *Mat. 24. 51.* compared with *Chap. 25. 41.*

Take but an instance or two of this, of two great men in their day ; the one a King, and a choice one, but found playing the Hypocrite ; the other a Bishop, or an Apostle, but a bad one, and an Hypocrite. And behold how severe and quick God is in punishing both the one and the other. The one is *David*, who playing not only the Murderer and Adulterer, but the unworthy Hypocrite with *Uriah* ; pretending kindness, but contriving and effecting

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effecting his death. How home doth God deal with this good man ! now *therefore the Sword shall never depart from thy House* : And if this were too light a punishment for secret but detestible iniquity and hypocrisie, God adds, *Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house. I will take thy Wives before thine eyes and give them unto thy Neighbour, and he shall lie with thy Wives in the sight of the Sun* ; The story you have at large in 2 Sam. 11 & 12 Chapters.

The other is *Judas*, one of the Twelve, that plaid the Hypocrite and Traytor with his Master, as you all know ; And what became of him ? No sooner is his hypocritical Act performed, but he departed and went and hang'd himself. Being a Preacher, could not preserve himself from bursting asunder, and all his Bowels gushing forth. Preachers of all Persons are in most danger, if found playing the Hypocrites, as God tells us *Psal. 50. 21. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence ; thou thoughtest I were altogether such a one as thy self ; but I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you, vers. 22.*

Therefore to close up this Use, and this Point ; Let it be the care and labour of the Souls of all wise Preachers, to share in the Commendation given to Christ by the *Herodians*, who said, *Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth ; neither carest thou for any man, for thou regardest not the persons of men, Matth. 22. 16.*

And to you Hearers, that are wise Hearers of the

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the Word of God, take that counsel of Zechariah, *These are the things ye shall do; speak ye every man truth to his Neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his Neighbour, and love no false Oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord, Zech. 8. 16, 17.*

Thus I have briefly finished this Point, and this Verse, because I am not willing to detain you any longer.

— I shall proceed to the next Verse and Words in the Text, *Vers. 11. The words of the wise are as Goats, and as Nails fastned by the Masters of Assemblies, which are given from one Shepherd.*

This is the close of this Argument, and of the Text, and is the third Particular asserted concerning all wise Preachers in the 9th Verse; we have his pains and diligence mentioned in the 10th Verse; we have his Doctrine vindicated; and in this Verse we have the Original and Advantage of such Preachers and Preaching declared; *The words of the wise are as Goats, and as Nails fastned by the Masters of Assemblies, which are given from one Shepherd.*

In which words generally we may observe two things.

First; The Nature and Property of wise Words, or the words of the Wise; *They are as Goats, and as Nails fastned by Masters of Assemblies.*

Secondly; We have presented to us the Rise and Original both of such Preachers and Preachings, *they are given from one Shepherd.*

In the first we have also two Particulars; first, The Persons spoken of, only the Wise, and the Words,

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Words, or *the Words of the Wise*. Secondly, That where-unto the Wise and their Words are resembled, and that is Goads and Nails.

In the second general we have also two Particulars; First, The Person or Spring from whom wise Preachers and wise Words come; that is, *from the one Shepherd*. Secondly; Note how they come from the one Shepherd voluntarily, freely *they are given from one Shepherd*.

Let me briefly open or explicate the Text.

Explication.

First; *What are those Goads and Nails to which the words of the Wise are resembled?* A Goad seems to be that usual and necessary Instrument which Neat-herds or Drovers use about Oxen, at labour and in travel; such we read of *Judges 3. 31.* and in *1 Sam. 13. 21.* Nails are either such as were used to fasten Tents, and the Tabernacle with, or other Habitations and things withal. Such was that Nail *Jaël* took to kill *Sisera* with, *Judges 4. 21.* Masters of Assemblies, or Masters of Companies, or Master-workmen in all Occupations. Some are choicer Workmen than others; one Shepherd, or the great and chief Shepherd is our Lord Jesus Christ.

The drift of these words, are only to imply the choiceness and usefulness of Wise-Preachers and Wise-Preaching. They and their Work are as perfect, useful, and necessary, as the choicest Artists and their Works: Such being as necessary and useful in Spirituals, as any other things can be in Humane Cases and Concernments,

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From the words thus opened, divers Observations or Doctrines might be raised ; as from the Persons and work here spoken of, *The Words of the Wise*, We may note ;

Doctrine 1.

That it tis not any Preacher or Preaching, but only the wise Preacher and wise Preaching that is the Peoples Blessing and Advantage ; such only will prove like to Goads and Nails.

The second, From the Comparison ; as *Goads and Nails*, which are not only good and exact in their Nature and Kind, but needful and necessary in their Use ; from which I might note ;

Doctrine 2.

That wise Preachers and Preaching are very necessary and needful for the People.

Thirdly, From the ground and occasion of *Goads and Nails*, which are not only good, but also to quicken and fasten. From whence we may note ;

Doctrine 3.

That the best of Saints need quickning and settling, which are the ends of Goads and Nails.

Fourthly, From the manner of attaining these, Note ;

Doctrine 4.

Either to be wise Preachers, and capable to give wise words, or to be a People so priviledged, as to have wise Preachers, and wise Words, is a free gift of God ; as 'tis said in the Text, which are given from one Shepherd.

Doctrine 5.

Lastly ; Note, *All divine Ministries and Ministrations come from the Lord Jesus, that one Shepherd, or that original Shepherd.*

For

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For brevity sake I shall only insist upon two Observations, into which I shall draw the substance of all the rest.

The first is this, *That wise and spiritual Preachers and their words are very useful, and necessary for the spiritual service and benefit of God's People, as the things mentioned, or the choicest things in Nature are or can be for natural ends and purposes.*

The second Conclusion is this, *That all Divine Ministries and Ministrations, spring from the alone Will and Wisdom of the Lord Jesus, that one Shepherd, and are freely given for the advantage of his People, as we have it in the Text, which are given from one Shepherd, (or from the one Shepherd.)*

To begin with the first of these, to wit, *That wise and spiritual Preachers and their words are very useful, and necessary for the spiritual service and benefit of God's People, as either the things mentioned, or the choicest things in Nature are or can be for natural ends or purposes.*

The truth of this Conclusion shines evidently in Scripture; as in that of Solomon, *A word fitly spoken, is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver; As an ear-ring of Gold, and an Ornament of fine Gold, so is a wise reprovcr upon an obedient ear; or, as the cold of Snow in the time of Harvest, so is a faithful Messenger to them that send him, for he refresheth the Soul of his Masters, Prov. 25. 11, 12, 13.* Hear also what the Apostle saith, *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a Preacher?* Oh, see the great necessity
and

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and utility of a wise Preacher. But lest this were not enough, he adds from the Prophet, as it is written, *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad tidings of good things?* Rom. 10. 14, 15.

To trouble you with no more, take that *Ephes. 4.* where we find the End and Use of wise Preachers; it is for perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for edifying of the Body of Christ; that we hence-forth be no more Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, by the sight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, vers. 12, 14. Two or three things in the Text clear this sufficiently.

Reason 1.

First; The Appellation put upon Preachers, (I mean, onely wise and profitable Preachers) they are stiled *wise*; and that is, as honourable to the Preacher, so also profitable to the People. For as that Peoples loss is great whose Preacher is a Fool; even so that Peoples gain is much whose Preacher is wise, unless themselves be in fault. This our Preacher gives us, saying, *The labour of the foolish wearyeth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the City. Woe to thee, O Land, when thy King is a Child, and thy Princes eat in the morning. Blessed art thou, O Land, when thy King is the Son of Nobles, and thy Princes eat in due season, for strength and not for drunkenness;* Ecclef. 10. 15, 16, 17.

Secondly; They are stiled *Masters of Assemblies* or Societies, which is a title and place of honour. Now as it is Preachers honour thus to be accounted, so it is the Peoples blessing and advantage

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have such Master-Workmen to be their Servants, that can wisely and profitably serve them. That this is Preacher's honour, (who are wise to be styled *Master-Workmen in God's Israel*, take a Text or two: *Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth*, Mat. 22. 16. with 3 John 10. Therefore to have such Workmen, must needs be the Peoples blessing and advantage.

Objection.

But some may Object and say, Is it not writtē, *But the Anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same Anointing teacheth you of all things*, 1 John 2. 27?

Answer.

To which I Answer, first, The Scripture nowhere really contradicts it self any where, but agrees with it self every where, and only so ought to be expounded. Therefore this of *John* must not contradict those of *Paul* which have been cited; which it would, if this were admitted to be the sense, That sanctified or anointed Persons need not the teachings of any man, (no, though the wisest of men.) Which what can be more contrary to this; *How shall they hear without a Preacher?* But let us take great heed of making Scripture so much as seem to fight with it self.

But, secondly; to what hath been Objected, I Answer, The word [*need not*] may be taken comparatively, not absolutely or positively; not no need at all, but not that need ye once had, and all have, that have not your anointing; such as are partakers of the *Uction of the Holy Ghost in a work*

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work of conversion, have not afterward such need of any to teach them as once they had, because now under the teachings of that Anointing.

Nor, thirdly, have they such a degree of need, as such have who are yet without this Unction, and are unregenerate. They mostly need teaching who are unregenerate, how much soever taught with other teaching.

But, fourthly; Consult the place, and the scope is not to put by the preaching of wise, but of seducing Preachers, as appears *vers. 26. These things have I written unto you, concerning them which seduce you.* Now though they had no need of the teachings of such as would seduce them, yet it follows not that they had no need of the teachings of such who would not seduce them.

Fifthly; Consider, that though these who lived under the Apostles teaching, had not such need of teaching, as such who wanted that teaching, yet that they wanted no teaching doth not follow.

And, lastly; Take this for Answer, Such as have received the Anointing spoken of, though they never enjoy afterwards any humane or instrumental teaching, yet shall be taught by the Anointing, provided it be God's providence, not the improvidence which keeps other means of teaching from them. In extraordinary cases, God can and will work without means. In ordinary cases God will work by means, and ties us to attend upon him in the use of means; and thus, *Faith comes by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God, Rom. 10. 17.* And so much for Answer of this Objection.

But

But now to return to the confirming of this Doctrine. As their Titles, so the Acts assigned to them by the Text, and which ought to be performed of them, (or at least designed by them) that is, to be as Goads and Nails in the sense given upon the place: They are Leaders, Conductors, or Guides of the Flock of Jesus Christ. And how unskilful are the choicest Sheep to lead and conduct themselves aright in their way or journey? Any Pastor, as well as their proper Pastor, shall become their Pastor, if not conducted and guided by wise and skilful Leaders or Overseers. Therefore saith the Psalmist, *He chose David also his Servant, and took him from the Sheep-folds, from following the Ewes great with young, he brought him to feed Jacob his People, and Israel his Inheritance: So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands,* Psal. 78. 70, 71, 72.

But again, Wise Preachers are not onely necessary, because Master-Workmen, and so Skilful, and Guides, and Leaders of the Flock, and so useful; But,

Thirdly, They are resembled to Goads and Nails: and how necessary are they? the use of Goads are to excite, and quicken dull and slothful Cattel to go forward; and of such use is the wise Preacher, both towards Sinners and Saints: And thus practised Holy Peter, who saith, *This second Epistle (beloved) I now write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the Holy Prophets, and of the Commandments of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour,*

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Saviour, 2 Pet. 3. 1, 2. And the need the Church hath of such Workmen, the Prophet *Isaiah* tells us, saying, *There is none that calleth upon thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee*, Isa. 64. 7.

But, Lastly; To set out the worth and need of wise Preachers, and their words, they are resembled to Nails; alluding, as I suppose, to the fixing, stablishing Nails of the Tabernacle; which how glorious a contrivance and workmanship soever in it self, yet would have been of little lustre, small use, and short continuance, if it had not enjoyed these Stakes, Pins, or Nails, to fix and fasten it, as in a sure place, *Isa. 22. 23, 24, 25*. In like manner, O how mutable, unsettled, and like unfixed and wandering Meteors would the World and the People of God be, were they without these sure hold-fasts, these divine Nails and Pins, as witnesseth *Moses*, where he saith, *For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt your selves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you*, Deut. 31. 29. Which Prophecy was fulfilled, *Judges 2. 10, 11*.

But this may suffice to confirm and clear this Doctrine, That wise and Spiritual-Preachers, and their words, are very useful and necessary for the spiritual benefit and service of God's People; as the things mentioned, or the choicest things in Nature can be for natural use or service. Let me now come to the Application hereof.

The

The first Use is of Information.

The first Use shall be for Information : If wise Preachers, and their words, be such choice blessings to that People which enjoy them ; then how mistaken are such as think otherwise of them, as burthensome and unprofitable persons, such as there is little or no need of ; and they can live well enough without knowing so much as others, or that which others can tell them, and have Grace and Light within, and need not such to guide them, and are wise enough to know the things of their own concernment, and therefore need not others to teach them. All that I shall say to these is, what the Lord said by *Moses* ; *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end,* Deut. 32. 29. To which I add, *Wo unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight,* Isa. 5. 21.

And, Lastly ; Let these hear the Word of the Lord ; *How do you say we are wise, and the Law of the Lord is with us. Lo, certainly in vain made be it ; the Pen of the Scribes is in vain, the wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken ; Lo, they have rejected the Word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them,* Jer. 8. 8, 9.

Exhortation.

But, Secondly ; This Doctrine affords us a double word of *Exhortation*. First, To such as are or ought to be wise Preachers.

First ; As Goads, and as Nails, and as Masters of

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of Assemblies: *Let your Light so shine before men, that they may see your good Works,* (as well as hear your good Words). Thus *Paul* did, saying, *Be ye followers of us, as we are of Christ. For we have given you an Example, that so doing you should feed the Flock,* 1 Cor. II. 1. and Acts 20. O, let us that preach to others, preach to our selves, to be like what we are resembled to, even Goads, and Nails, and Masters of Assemblies, (though under that great Shepherd the Lord Jesus) as *Peter* tells us, as not being Lords, but skilful Master-workmen, quickning and exciting the Flock to love and good Works. And for this end take we care of two things.

First; Be shining Examples in the practice of what-ever light of Doctrine we hold forth to others; Practice in our selves is best preaching unto others.

But, Secondly; Since we are resembled to such useful necessary things, let us, as Leaders of the Flock, both know and take care of the state of the Flock, quickning and provoking such as are backward, dull, and wanting, both by encouragement and reprehension, as the Peoples case requires; imitating Holy *Peter*, who resolved, so long as he was in this Tabernacle, to stir the People up, by putting them in remembrance, 2 Pet. 1. 13. That so the state of *Jerusalem* may be a quiet Habitation, a Tabernacle that shall not be taken down, nor one of the Stakes thereof ever be removed, neither any of the Cords thereof be broken, *Isa.* 30. 20.

Exhort.

Exhortation 2.

But, Secondly. Let me now offer a word of Exhortation to you that are Hearers, which is: If wise Preachers should be like goads, and nails, and masters of Assemblies; then let me persuade you to suffer them so to be unto you, suffer them to oversee your state, and to deal wisely, and faithfully with you, quickning, and exciting you, rebuking, and reproving you, when your Condition calls for it, and let them stablish, strengthen, settle you, according to their Duty, as *Joshua*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and *Paul*, and other Master-workmen did, as you may read, *Josh. 23.* with *Ezra 10.* and *Nehemiah 5.* with *Acts 20.* And consider, although this is the Preachers Duty thus to do, yet is this more than many Hearers and Church-members can bear, either to be observed, rebuked, quickened, or fixed in their places, to their work and duty: But are rather like those *Psal. 2.* who say, *Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast their cords from us;* or like those that said, *Our tongues are our own, who shall controul us?* *Psal. 12.* And how then can a Preacher, how wise, how diligent, how zealous, how faithful, how loving, how watchful soever, do his Duty, to be as goads and as nails, when the People cannot submit to him, but are like those the Lord complains of, saying, *Let no man strive, or reprove another; for this people are as they that strive with the Priest,* *Hos. 4. 4.* O therefore let me exhort you, that are wise Hearers, and enjoy wise Preachers, accept of the Counsel given, Obey

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them

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them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : For they watch for your Souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief ; for that is unprofitable for you, Heb. 13.17. But again,

Lastly ; If wise Preachers be such great Blessings, such useful, necessary enjoyments (even almost of necessity to be enjoyed) then all you that enjoy such Blessings, bless God abundantly for them, and be a blessing to them, by accepting them, and their Labours, by obeying, and submitting to them, and their Doctrine. Be enlightened by their enlightning words, and quickened by their quickning words, and fixed by their fixing, stablishing words, and Arguments. *Not being wavering-minded ones, carried about with every wind of Doctrine, or cunning craftiness of men,* Heb. 13.9. Eph. 4.4. But suffer your Preachers to say, as Job did, *When the ear heard me, then it blessed me ; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me : I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame ; I was a Father to the poor, and the Cause which I knew not, I searched out. I brake the Jaws of the wicked, and pluckt the spoil out of his teeth,* Job 29.11,15,16,17. and so much for this Doctrine.

One thing more I shall speak to, and so conclude the Text, which is this ;

The Fourteenth Doctrine.

That all Ministries and Ministrations spring from the alone will, and wisdom of the Lord Jesus, that one Shepherd, and are freely given for the advantage

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sage of his people; As we have it in the Text,
Which are given from one Shepherd.

Take for the proof hereof these Testimonies,
*Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewed out
her seven Pillars; she hath killed her beasts, she
hath mingled her wine, she hath also furnished
her Table, she hath sent forth her Maidens,*
8cc. Prov. 9. 1, 2, 3. But again hear what
John saith, *All things were made by him, and
without him was not any thing made, that was made,*
John 1. 3. and Paul tells us, *Of him, and through
him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for
ever, Amen,* Rom. 11. 36. And again he tells us,
God hath set some in the Church, *first Apostles,*
secondly Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that are
Miracles, then Gifts in Healing, helps in Govern-
ment, diversity in Tongues, 1 Cor. 14. 28. This
may suffice for the proof of this point, That all
Ministers, Ministries, Ministrations which are
divine and *evangelical*, must and do come from
the alone good will and wisdom of the Lord Je-
sus, and are freely given for the good of his Peo-
ple.

But for the better opening of this *Doctrine*, let
me explain these few things, (1.) What I mean
by Ministers, Ministries, and Ministrations.
(2.) How they spring from the alone good will
and wisdom of the Lord Jesus. (3.) In what
sense I intend they are freely given. (4.) and *lastly*,
why I say freely given, for the good of his Church
and People.

First, Let me speak to the *first*; By *Ministers*, I
mean all, and only all such persons, as are in the
Church of Christ, admitted into Ministry, or

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Office in the Church ; and so are differenced, and distinguished from the *Memeral* part thereof, or such who are only *Members* therein : I speak not here of Ministers, or Officers *Civil*, or belonging to the Commonwealth, nor of *Antichristian*, or *National* Ministers ; but only of such as are, or pretend to be Christ's Ministers : I say all these must spring from him, *Whom God hath made both Lord and Christ, and holdeth the seven stars in his right hand*, Act. 2. 36. with *Revel. 2. 1.* By Ministries, I mean not Officers but Offices, or those Institutions and Appointments for making of Ministers.

Secondly, These also spring from the Headship, Authority, Will, and Wisdom of the Lord Jesus only. It is not allowable in any Kingdom, Free-State, or Common-Wealth, that any but the Head and Supream Power thereof, should assume the appointing or making Offices or Ministries therein. Even so none save the Lord Jesus is allowed to institute and appoint what Offices and Ministries shall be in the Church, that is, in his Church and Kingdom. For although the Father hath given all Authority and Power to the Son, to appoint Ministries for his Church, yet hath not the Son given or committed any such power, as to institute or appoint any Office or Ministry in the Church to any sort of Persons under the Sun ; but hath written, *Thou shalt not make*, Exod. 20. And this was the great sin of *Jeroboam*, that he made Priests, 1 Kings 12. 31.

But, Thirdly ; Let me open what I mean or intend by a Ministration, or by Ministrations ; to wit, such *Acts* or *Works* as Persons made Officers over the Church

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Church of God are to perform, in, and for the Church of God. Now, I say, that as none can appoint Christ a Minister, or determine by what Ministry he shall be served but himself, no more can or ought any but the Lord from Heaven, heavenly to appoint what Work or Ministration these shall perform to Christ, but *the true Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of all things, Rev. 22.13.* But as all Ministries come from him, even so from him must proceed all Gospel-Ministration or Performances. But again, when I say in the Doctrine, that they spring from the alone good Will and Wisdom of the Lord Jesus, I intend not to exclude God considered as the Father, who is God over all, blessed for ever-more; but onely I would exclude all the Children of men from having any part or portion in the begetting or giving beeing to any Gospel Ministry or Ministration: This under the Father proceeds from the Lord Jesus Christ, who when he ascended up on high, gave Gifts unto Men for the Work of the Ministry, *Ephes. 4.* 'Twas good Will, none could have constrained him so to have done; and 'twas his own Wisdom, without the wisdom of the flesh, contrived and concluded the mode and manner of his own Service, *Mat. 28. 18, 19, 20.* with *Acts the first*, abundantly declare. And further, when I say Ministers, Ministries, and Ministrations are freely given, I intend, that as the Church had never been purchased by Christ, but that he freely gave himself for it; so no more had the Church ever attained, or enjoyed, any Ministry, or Institution, and Appointment about Gospel-Ministers, and Gospel-Ministrations, but onely through the

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good Will and good Pleasure of him that dwelt in the Bush, (for indeed all Institutions spring onely from the Will and Pleasure of the Institutor) as not being moral, but instituted Beings. Further, I mean, no man can come to be one of Christ's Ministers, but by the free will of Christ. He can neither attain Grace or Gifts to qualifie and fit him, nor choice into any Ministry under Christ, but by the free-will and good-pleasure of Christ, as *Paul* acknowledgeth, saying, *Whereof I was made a Minister, according to the Gift of the Grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power*, Ephes. 3. 7, 8. And as to Choice, *Solomon* tells us, *The Lot is cast into the Lap, but the whole disposition thereof is of the Lord*, Prov. 16. 33. But further, I mean by this Expression *freely of the Lord*, that when such a People attain such a Ministry, and such a Minister such a Congregation, this is, or ought to be, of the Lord.

And, Lastly; When I tie up all Ministries, Ministrations, or Ministers, onely to the Church and People of God, as given and provided for them; I mean, exclusively. They are neither instituted nor appointed for the use and service of the World, but of the Church and Elect of God; further then accidentally, and by way of redundancy, as *Paul* tells us, in 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. I say further, then accidentally: *'Tis Childrens Bread, and ought not to be given to Dogs*, Mat. 15. 26. Thus much for Explication.

Let me now confirm this by *Argument* or *Reason*; to wit, that all Ministers, Ministries, and Ministrations, meet to be owned for Christ's, or Evangelical, do all spring from the alone Will and

Autho-

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Authority of the Lord Jesus, and are freely given for the service of himself and People.

Reason 1.

First; This must needs be thus, because it is said of Christ, That God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name; That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father, Phil. 2. 9, 10, 11. But this could not be affirmed of Christ, if he had not this Priviledge and Prerogative, which Princes on Earth are not denied, even to give a being to his own Ministers and their Ministrations. That this Priviledge earthly Powers have assumed and been allowed; witness *Pharaoh*, Gen. 41. 38, 39, 40, 41. The like we read done by *Solomon*, 1 Kings 2. 35. Thus did *Ahasuerus*, Hester, 10. 2, 3. And the like did *Darius*, Dan. 6. 1, 2. with many others that might be produced. And shall not the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, be allowed the same priviledge which other subordinate and inferior Princes are allowed, even to institute, nominate, and appoint his own Servants, or Ministers, and their Ministrations? Yes doubtless, for as the Text alledged tells us, *He is exalted to a Name above every Name*; and *David* speaking of the Lord Christ, tells us, This must be his priviledge, That God the Father will make him his first born higher than the Kings of the earth, Psal. 89. 27. Therefore this Prerogative must needs be allowed him.

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Reason 2.

Secondly; I conclude, this must be the Prerogative of Christ, to give the Rise and Being to his own Ministers, and their Ministrations, because none of the Children of men are wise enough for so great and glorious an undertaking; *Paul* speaking but of the accomplishment of the Work of one of Christ's Ministers, saith, and *who is sufficient for these things*? Then surely, much less sufficient to institute a Frame & Constitution for Ministers and Ministrations, which requires a greater capacity or sufficiency then the former; wherefore *John* tells us, *No man in Heaven, nor in Earth, neither under the Earth, was able to open this Book, neither to look thereon*, Rev. 5. 3, 4. Wherefore this concern must be let alone to him, to whom of right it doth appertain, even to the Lyon of the Tribe of Judah, our Lord Jesus, for he onely is worthy and capable thereof, as we read *vers.* 5. compared with *vers.* 9. But to proceed.

Reason 3.

Thirdly; This must needs be the peculiar Prerogative of Christ, to appoint his own Ministers, and Worship, or Service, because 'tis his own; 'tis for himself, 'tis for his own Church and Kingdom; and who shall appoint him Servants, or impose Servants and Services upon him? It stands not with his honour or faithfulness to admit it. But again;

Reason 4.

Lastly; Ministries and Ministrations Spiritual, Ecclesiastical, appertaining to the Kingdom of Christ, must spring from the Free-will and Royal-Pleasure of the Lord Christ; because that as it
stands

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stands not with his Honour, Greatness, Wisdom, and Goodness to commit this concern into the hands of Angels or Men, being below true fitness or capacity for the work; so neither can any created Power snatch Authority, or exercise Power of imposing Ministers and Ministrations upon him against his Royal Will and Pleasure; and if they but attempt to do it, let them look to it, for he will one day dash them in pieces like a Potters Vessel, *Pf. 2.* And however the Sons of men may attempt to incroach this Power and Priviledge of the Lord Jesus into their hands; yet let me say to these as the Prophet in a like case did, *What is the Chaff to the Wheat, saith the Lord?* Jer. 23. 28. Even so, what is the Will or Power of Man, to the Will and Power of the Lord Jesus, that he should oppose him, or impose upon him? 'Tis truth, Man may impose upon the Son of Man; but who can impose upon the Son of God? *Sampson* and *Peter* were both imposed upon, and carried whither they would not; but none can impose any thing upon Christ against his will, for he will, and can, refuse to drink such Gall and Vinegar, however they be that offer it to him. Therefore it remains most clear and visible from all that hath been offered, That this is the alone Glory and Prerogative of the Lord Jesus, to be the Spring and Fountaneous cause of all Ministries, Ministers, and Ministrations belonging to his own Church, upon whom he freely bestowed them.

Thus much for the confirming and clearing of the Doctrine; I come now to the Application of this great Point.

Infor-

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Use of Information.

First ; This serves for *Information* in two or three Particulars.

First, It informs us how much such are mistaken, that conceive and affirm that it is left free and arbitrary to States and Princes. to judge and conclude, what Ministry and Ministration the People of God should enjoy in their Dominions ; whereas in truth it nothing at all appertains to them, but only to the Lord Jesus to appoint and determine what kind of Ministers and Ministrations his People shall fall under ; as the Arguments before alledged do manifest. Men have liberty and freedom to judge and determine for themselves, but no power to impose or determine for others ; as *Paul* saith, *Who art thou, O man, that judgest another Man's Servant ? to his own Master he standeth or falleth ; yea, he shall be holden up ; for God is able to make him to stand*, Rom. 14. 4. But again, to proceed ;

Secondly, This informs us how far that assertion is from being a Scripture-Truth, which maintains, That Ministries and Ministrations depend upon the Christian Magistrate for confirmation ; whereas indeed it depends upon the good will and pleasure of none of the Sons of Men, but onely upon the Son of God, who is Lord of all things. I suppose in this case, I may say with truth, what *Korah* and his Complices said with falshood, *Ye take too much upon you*, who-ever you are that thus affirm and practise, *Numb.* 16. 3.

Thirdly, This acquaints us, that such Ministers, and

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and Ministries, and Ministrations, that spring not from the Will, Wisdom, and Authority of the Lord Jesus, are none of his Ministers, Ministries, or Ministrations, but Man's, either their own or other mens creation or creating; Let them be dignified or distinguished by what Names or Titles soever, even from the Pope to the Parātor: and if such will not be called Antichristian Ministers, yet must they suffer me to call them *Man's Minister*; and let all such Ministers of Man, and of the Will of Man, hear their doom; *Mine hand shall be upon the Prophets that see vanity and divine lies; they shall not be in the Assembly of my People, neither shall they be written in the House of Israel, neither shall they enter into the Land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord God,* Zech. 13. 9. Further this informs us, That all such Ministrations as spring not from the Lord Jesus, neither are instituted by him, nor found in the Writings of the *New Testament*, are none of Christ's Ordinances, but mens sinful inventions and superstition, concerning which our Lord long time since gave his Judgment, saying, *But in vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrine the Commandments of men,* Mat. 15. 9.

Fourthly, and Lastly; This acquaints us, That the Innovation, or bringing into the Church of God such Ministers and Ministrations as our Lord Jesus Christ never instituted, neither spring from, nor depend upon him, is no small, but a magnified Transgression. If it be Treason against a King for any in his Dominion to introduce Offices, Officers, Laws and Ordinances, without his consent. O! what high Treason is it against our Sovereign Lord
King

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King Jesus, the King, or *Prince of the Kings of the Earth*, Rev. 1. 5. I say, What Treason is it for any man, or number of men, to make and appoint Ministers and Ordinances in his Church and Kingdom without him! Let all such Traytors against the Lord Jesus think seriously on two or three Texts of Scripture I shall commend unto them; one is that of *Isaiah*, *Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouths, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men: Therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work amongst this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid*, Chap. 29. 13, 14. Again, think on that passage of *Ezekiel*; *And he said to me, Son of man, the place of my Throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, I will dwell in the midst of the Children of Israel for ever, and my holy Name shall the Children of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their Kings in their high places; in their setting of their Thresholds by my Thresholds, and their Posts by my Posts, and the Wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy Name by their abominations they have committed; wherefore I have consumed them in my anger*, Chap. 43. 7, 8. So much for this first Use, or for Information.

The second Use is Vindication or Justification.

A second Use of this Point may be for *Vindication or Justification* of all such Gospel-Ministers and Mini-

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Ministrations as proceed from the Will and Authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, manifest by his Word to be Divine and Warrantable, notwithstanding they are unapproved by humane Authority, (nay though they should be by them forbidden); my Reason is this; If such Ministries, Ministers, and Ministrations, be given and allowed by the Lord Jesus, whom alone God the Father hath intrusted with these Affairs; then they have Allowance and Approbation from him, whose Allowance and Approbation is only essential and sufficient for their Encouragement and Vindication; and it very little matters, as to their Justification, whether such persons which are unconcerned in this Affair, do approve or disapprove, while the Lord, though not man, hath approved them. This the Lord told Ezekiel, Chap. 2. *And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the Children of Israel, to a rebellious Nation, that hath rebelled against me; and their Fathers have transgressed against me unto this very day; For they are impudent Children, and stiff-hearted; I do send thee unto them, and thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear,* Vers. 2, 3, with 5, 7.

To the Vindication of a Minister in his Work, it little matters whether men of what rank or degree soever they be, do allow, permit, or discourage him, whilst his Lord and Master hath but sent and commissioned him, he need not much be troubled with the prohibitions and oppositions of his fellow Servants: Nay, if he will not be rebellious like them, he must go on his Errand, and neither fear them, or be prohibited by them, but remember what

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what is further added in that passage of *Ezekiel*, *But thou, Son of Man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious, like that rebellious house, open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee, vers. 8.* And therefore Christ's Gospel-Ministers may warrantably answer any that inquire, by what Authority do you thus Administer? *Be it known unto you, that by the alone Name and Authority of the Lord Jesus, we thus administer; and if any of their Mothers Children should be angry with them, and threaten them with their thorney Arguments of persecution and affliction, they may, as others have done before them, say, O Nebuchadnezzar, We are not careful to answer thee in this matter, Dan. 3. 16. with Acts 4.*

Query.

But some may say, *How shall a State or People know who are such Ministers, and what are such Ministrations as are truly Christ's, and arise from him, minister to him, and depend upon him?*

Answer.

- I*Answer, By doing that which God enjoyned all the Kings of *Israel* to do, in *Deut. 17.* *And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the Throne of his Kingdom, that he shall write him a Copy of the Law in a Book, out of that which is before the Priests, the Levites; And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the dayes of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this Law, and these Statutes, to do them, vers. 18, 19.* By thus doing, by Reading, and Learning what God hath written in his Book of the Scriptures may they come to know, who are the true Spiritual Gospel-Ministers of the Lord Jesus. Thus did

did that great Reformer *Nehemiah*, when he would know who were the Lord's true Priests and Ministers; He searched into the Register, and such of the Priests as could not produce and shew their Genealogy, he put, as polluted, from the Priesthood, *Chap. 7. 64, 65.*

Therefore if any profess themselves Ministers of the Lord Jesus, and you would know whether they be Christ's, or Antichrist's Ministers; ask for their Genealogy, and let them shew their Line from *Judah*, not from *Levi*; I mean, from Christ, and not from Men, whether *Pope* or *Presbyter*; for our Lord took care of this Concern, when he spent forty dayes with his Disciples in settling the Things of his Kingdom, *Acts 1. 3.* And before he ascended upon High, he gave Gifts unto Men for the Work of the Ministry; some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors, some Teachers, *Ephes. 4. 8, 11.* But we read not of any Pope, or Vicar-General; no Cardinals, Arch-Bishops, Lord-Bishops, Fryers, Monks, Deans, Doctors, Batchellors, Parsons, Curates, or the residue of these Locusts; these never came into the World by Christ's Charter, or Deed of Gift, made over to the Church before his Ascension. No, no, these came in the back way, through the opening of the bottomless Pit, *Rev. 9. 1, 2, 3.* That wisdom of the Father, even our Lord Jesus, who builed his House, killed his Fatlings, also provided his own Maidens, or Virgin-Servants, which are but few, yet not too few to do all his Work. As his House stands upon seven Pillers, even so he provided but seven sorts of Ministers, or Ministries, besides the Widdows, those helps to Government,

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as the New Testament testifies: and an Old Testament Institution, can give no being to a New Testament Ministrations; and in all the Records of Christ's Acts and Institutions, we read not of any other Ministry ordained for the Church, than the Ministry of Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, which three were extraordinary and temporary, and are ceased, and there remains only now to be enjoyed the Ministry of Pastor, Teacher, Elder, and Deacon; with the fore-named helps to Government, as sufficient to all Ends and Purposes in Christ's Kingdom; and of these we read *Rom. 12. Having then Gifts, differing according to the Grace given to us, whether Prophecie, let us prophesie according to the proportion of Faith or Ministry. Let us wait on our Ministry; he that teacheth, on Teaching; he that exhorteth, on Exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence,* Vers. 6, 7, 8. Now such who have neither Name nor Nature of these Ministries, can be none of Christ's, but Man's, or Antichrist's.

But again, ask all such who pretend to be Ministers of Christ, by what Door or Way they came into the Ministry. For they, who ever they be, that come not in by Christ's Door into his Sheep-fold, are Theeves and Robbers, *John 10. 1.* Now Christ's way for men to become his Ministers, is by, first, joyning and accompanying themselves with the Church or Congregation, whose Ministers they are to be; as appears by *Acts 1. 21.* where we read Peter tells the Church, *That of these men that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, be-*
ginning

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ginning from the Baptism of John, unto the same day that he was taken up from among us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his Resurrection, Verl. 22. And thus they chose Ministers, Acts 6. according to Apostolical Direction, who said, *Wherefore Brethren, look you out from among your selves seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and Wisdom, whom we may appoint to this business,* verl. 4.

Again, ask those who profess themselves Christ's Ministers, Who put them into their Ministry, the Church, or any particular sort of men distinct from the Congregation, whose Ministers they are? For none but the Church (I mean, a particular Church) can make a Man a Minister of any of Christ's particular Churches, or Golden Candlesticks; It was the Church, not the Apostles, chose, accepted, and admitted those into the Office of Deaconship, which we read of *Act. 6. 5, 6. And they chose Steven, a man full of Faith, and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenos, and Nicolas a Profelyte of Antioch, whom they set before the Apostles.* And if the Churches of Christ should not have this power, to give the Beeing and Ordination to their own Servants and Ministers, without dependance on others, then should the power and priviledges of Christ's Churches, be less than of civil Corporations, of private Families, which were absurd to imagine. Not to grant this to every individual and particular Church and Congregation, were to maintain, That Christ's Churches are in Bondage, and not Free States, or Politick Bodies, which were derogatory both to Christ and to his Church.

Further,

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Further, either the Church, or persons less than the Church, must make Ministers; but the Text tells us, *The lesser must be blessed of the greater.* Therefore every Church of Christ, and not any distinct sort of Persons there-from must make Ministers for themselves. *Heb. 7. 7.* we read, *And without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the greater,* yea, and subjected to the greater, even every Gospel-Minister to his Congregation, who may not only, when occasion requires, say to Archippus, *Take heed to the Ministry thou hast received of the Lord, to fulfil it,* Col. 4. 17. But likewise if Archippus will not here reform, and obey them; as they gave him admittance into their Fellowship, and into his Ministry, they also may take from him both the one and the other; and let him be unto them as an Heathen and a Publican, Mar. 18. 17.

Again, ask these what Ministers of Christ they are? Apostles, Evangelists, and extraordinary Prophets they cannot be, who-ever they be, for they ceased with Foundation-work, and Dayes; and as they were raised up, and filled with Gifts and Grace, suiting such who were to lay the Foundation of Faith, Church-Worship, Ministry and Ministrations, according to commission from Christ, Mar. 28. 19, 20. So they were to be but twelve in number, as Acts 1. with Rev. 21. where it is said, *And the Wall of the City had twelve Foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb,* Ver. 14. The last Vision John saw, and the most glorious City that upon Earth the Saints shall ever see, will have but twelve Apostles names in the Foundation thereof; wherefore
try

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try them that say they are Apostles, and they will be found lyars, *Rev. 2. 2.* And for Evangelists to assist Apostles in writing Scripture, and such like Services, there being now no Apostles to assist, or Scripture to write or fill up, there is no need of these, as no way to attain these, for all these extraordinary Officers came not into the Church by the Door or Way that ordinary Ministers or Officers do, but by a more immediate way from Heaven; as *Paul* witnesseth, *Gal. 1. 1.* *Paul an Apostle, not by man, nor of man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised him from the dead.* And for extraordinary Prophets, as we have none, so all that are acquainted with the Scripture, know they were immediately made Prophets by the Lord: All therefore that say they are Christ's Gospel-Ministers, must profess or acknowledge themselves to be either Pastors, or Teachers, or Elders, or Deacons and Deaconesses.

Now he that is a Pastor, cannot at the same time be a Teacher, that is, an official Teacher, whose Work and Office is distinct, as well as his name from the Pastor, and the Elder or Ruler is distinct in Name and Work from both the former, and the Deacon from all the rest, as the formentioned Scriptures declare.

Now if they have neither Name, nor Gifts of Christ's Ministers, then can they be none of Christ's but another sort of Ministers: I do not say that a bare assuming, or owning a Man's self to be a Pastor, or Teacher, or Elder, will prove him one of Christ's Ministers; but try what men are called in to the Office and Ministry of.

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Objection.

And if any should Object and say, *But are not these common names, viz. Pastors, Elders, Teachers, Bishops, and the like?*

Answer.

I Answer, In a common acceptation and use of the term they are, and may be so improved; but yet these names, are properly the names of Christ's distinct and peculiar Ministers; and answerable to their proportionableness thereunto are they to be chosen into that very Ministry they are mostly fitted and adapted for: As he whose Gift and Spirit mostly disposes him to *Exhortation* and *Application* of Principles, received and believed, ought to be chosen into the Pastor's Office; and he whose Gifts and Qualification bends most to Expound, Interpret, and open the sense and meaning of the Word, is meetest to be chosen into the Office of a Teacher; and so he that is wise, zealous, grave, vigilant, and most disposed to see the Churches Affairs done decently, and in order, is most meet for the Office of Ruling-Elder, or Governor in the Church of Christ: And he that is most inclined to mercy, kindness, charity, bountifulness, liberality, and giving, is meetest of all the Church for the Office of Deaconship in the Church. For as *Adam* called every thing by its proper name; even so would the Second *Adam* have his Ministers called by their proper,

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proper, not improper names; from their fitness and suitability to their Work chosen, and called either Pastors, Teachers, Elders, or Deacons.

But, lastly; Would you know whether Persons pretending to be Christ's Ministers be so or no? ask them whose Servants they are, and whom they obey, Christ and his Will, or Man and his Will? For you know who said it, *His Servants ye are, to whom ye yeeld your selves obedient*, Rom. 6. 16. Now try whose Will and Mind Ministers obey, Christ's or Man's; whose Word they walk by, Christ's or Man's; whose Worship they offer up, Christ's or Man's; *For by their Fruits*, saith our Lord, *you shall know whether men are true or false Prophets*, Mat. 7. 15, 16. Christ's Ministers offer no strange Fire, nor make any composition to anoint God's Kings, Priests, or Prophets with, but according to divine Direction and Institution; remembering that word, *See that thou makest all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the Mount*, Heb. 8. 8. compared with *Exod. 25. 40*. Christ's Ministers are to administer according to Christ's appointment, not Man's, for they are His and not Man's Servants, and therefore must teach themselves and the People to observe all things that Christ hath commanded, and nothing which he hath not commanded to be observed or taught; Dare they observe or teach others to observe, as our Lord teacheth, *Mat. 28. 20*. and *Paul* practised, *1 Cor. 11. 23*. saying, *That which I received of the Lord, that delivered I also unto you, and nothing else?*

Christ's Ministers are not to seek what to do in

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the Administration of their Office, but have all things plainly written in the Tables of the Scripture, that he which runneth may read his Duty; their Rule, is Scripture; their Help, the Spirit; their Work, Christ's instituted Will and Worship; and their Ability and Sufficiency, the Grace and Gifts of the Spirit, and their Wages only the good Will of Christ's People, among whom they labour, they need not any man to teach them, but as that Anointing teacheth them all things; they can Pray without a Prayer-Book, and Preach without Common-Places, or the help of Commentators, and Administer Sacraments and Censures without a Directory or Book of Canons of Man's making, being thoroughly made wise, and sufficiently furnished unto every good and Gospel-Work, by Grace and Scripture, without any of *Saul's* Armour; they need no Garments of Distinction, nor shews of Piety, or Purity, or Gravity without Substance. Neither want they any vain unwarrantable Ceremonies or Gestures of Man's devising, to make their Administrations appear beautiful, and prove edifying; and yet all their things to be done decently, and according to due or Gospel order.

Now if thus you please to try, and prove, or measure Christ's professed Ministers, and their Ministrations, by the Golden Reed of the Scripture, you may certainly know who they are, that say they are Apostles and are not, but do lie, and as polluted; let all such be put from the Priesthood.

'Tis these Wise-Preachers, and Gospel-Ministers

* The "Directory" was printed that
March, 1644-5.

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that I only assert, spring from the good Will of Christ, and appertain to Christ; the rest are but *Apocrypha-Writing*, and as groundless and useless, meet to be of all that belong to Christ the Lord rejected.

And this I suppose may be sufficient for Gospel-Ministers, and the Ministrations Vindication, against any that shall dare to traduce or slander them as Incroachers and Intruders into other mens Work, and none of Christ's Ministers, but a sort of Factious, Schismatical and Heretical Persons, disobedient, and turbulent or troublesome to the Government.

Yet let what hath been said be but weighed and considered, and it will appear, that they are given forth from the one great Shepherd of the Sheep-fold. *And, O how beautiful are the feet of such who bring glad tidings of peace!*

So much for this Use, in which I have been the larger, because of the weight and consequence of these things.

The third Use is for Exhortation.

The third, and I suppose the last Use I shall make of this Doctrine, is for Exhortation.

First; To such as are Christ's Ministers.

Secondly; To all you that are Christ's Churches and Servants.

First; Let me beseech and exhort you all, Fathers and Brethren, that are Gospel-Ministers under the Lord Jesus: If your Office and Ministry be given and derived from the Lord Jesus; O

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then, as that great Preacher of the Gospel to the Gentiles, *Paul*, said, *Let us magnifie our Office*, *Rom. 11. 13.* Even by so doing, as he did, by labouring, if by any means we may provoke to emulation them that are our flesh, and might save some of them. O let us who are Christ's, serve the great design of Christ; and let not us, as some do, serve our own Bellies, and not the Lord Jesus, *Rom. 16. 18.* O, if not only our Ministry be of Christ, and from Christ, but a Ministry for Christ. O then, be exhorted to make it our great and main business, to seek not our own things or glory, but the things of our Lord Jesus, and his great glory, to whom belongs all honour, and glory, and blessing, for ever and ever, *Amen.* If we have his glory as great in our eye, then let our great business be, to get or procure his glory, as our Lord tells us he did before us, *John 8. 50. I seek not my own glory; yea, our blessed Lord makes it a Character of a true Minister, that he is thus minded, telling us, He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness in him, John 7. 18.* Servants must not so much, whilst Servants, promote their own Interest and Credit as their Lord and Masters; even no more should we promote our own Glory or Interest in the World but Christ's.

Secondly; Let me Exhort you my Brethren, if you are Christ's Ministers, and spring from him; then pray you approve your selves to him; remember how you have received, and be faithful in
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your ministration to him. Let us not forget that saying; *Behold, I send an Angel before them to keep them in the way, and to bring them to the place that I have prepared: But beware of him, and obey his voice, and provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my Name is in him,* *Exod. 23. 20, 21.* O consider, he will not spare Levites, Priests, nor Ministers of the House of Israel no more, no nor so much as others of the House of Jacob: You know what is written, *Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the People I will be glorified,* *Levit. 10. 3.* Wherefore let us be faithful Stewards of the manifold Mysteries of God; let not us neglect Christ's Work, nor corrupt his Work. *Cursed is and shall be he that doth the Work of the Lord negligently, which is deceitfully; not doing as many which corrupt the Word of God; but of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ,* *2 Cor. 2. 17.*

But to come nearer, Let me humbly offer a few things, which I would desire all that are Christ's Ministers to take special care of.

First; Consult often your Commission, ponder your instruction for Ministration, and do not be a stranger to the Weight and Duty of your Ministry. If the Kingly Ministry had need daily to be Looking or Reading in the Book of the Law, what his Office and Duty towards God and the People is; as from that passage of *Deuteronomy* was declared; certainly even so have Christ's Priestly Mini-

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Ministers much more need to study the Scripture, which are Christ's Book of Ordination: that we may know how we ought to behave our selves in the House of God, the Pillar and Ground of Truth; 1 Tim. 3. 15. *Study to know our own Ministry, and our own proper and peculiar Work.* 'Tis, I fear, a cause of the wantingness of many, even Gospel-Ministers, That they are too much ignorant of this thing, even the Nature, Property, and Duty of their Office and Ministry; like persons newly entered into the World, or the Affairs thereof; make more haste to get into, than wisely to consider their Duty therein. Even so I fear is it with too many of us Preachers or Ministers of the Lord Jesus; They make more haste to be Christ's Ministers, than to consult the great Duty of that Office and Ministry.

But, *Secondly*; Let me offer this sense; We are Christ's Ministry or Ministers, and the Treasure in our Earthen Vessels is his, and none of ours: Then let us be careful of giving away any of Christ's our Sovereign Right and Priviledges, who ever they be that demand it. Be like *Moses* and *Israel*, who would not part with, nor leave in *Egypt* any thing of God's Portion, as we read in that passage *Exod 9. 16. There shall not an Hoof be left behind us.* And thus did *Israel* deal with the Kings of *Canaan*; *So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out before us, them will we possess,* *Judg 11. 24.* Even so, give not away to any the right of your Sovereign Lord King Jesus, whose Ministers we are, divide not the living Child to please the Harlot;

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I mean, mingle not Christ's and Antichrist's Ordinances together ; Plow not with an Ox and an Ass together ; nor wear Linsey-Woolsey Garments, but remember, it is written, *Thou shalt not sow thy Vineyard with divers Seeds*, (much less may we sow God's Vineyard with divers Seeds) *Deut. 22. 9, 10, 11.* For the Ark and Dragon, Christ our Lord, and Belial cannot agree together, *1 Sam. 5. 3, 4.* with *2 Cor. 6. 14, 15.* But remember, the Lord our God is a Jealous God, and he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his Name in vain. Though there are some whose Prudence, Moderation, and Zeal to Preaching, will permit them to do otherwise, namely, to mingle the Holy Seed, and do that they otherwise would not do ; namely, to conform to men, that they may preach Christ to the People, Administer Prayer and Sacraments by a formal Service-Book ; Baptize all Children, even the Seed of the Adulterer and the Adulterers ; though God of old said, *Such Seed shall not enter into the Congregation of the Lord ! to the tenth Generation, Deut. 23. 2.* Nay more, if all this was too little, they rather then stand out, will spread the Lord's Table for that Troop, which his Soul abhors, even a People that neither have nor can examine themselves, or discern the Lord's Body ; yet these must be Communicants, and pay for it, or else be Excommunicants.

Yea, to make the measure full, they dare meddle with Civil Actions, and deceive the People, as if to Marry and Bury the Dead, were part of the Administrations committed by Jesus Christ into the hand

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hand of his Ministers; then which nothing is more false: For if it were unfit for some of Christ's Ministers to tend the Tables of the Living, 'tis much more unmeet for any of Christ's Ministers to tend the Dead, or intermeddle with Civil Concerns, and Marry the living; but these pass for pious, sober, peaceable men; but let them remember, who said, of two evils, they must chuse the least. 'Tis not to be taken of sins, of clear and real sins; for here we must chuse nor take neither; for it is written, *Thou shalt not do evil that good may come thereof: for if we do, damnation is just*, Rom. 3. 18. 'Tis not wisdom, but folly to conform against Conscience to man's Inventions, though to preach the Gospel. 'Twere better to say with *Paul*, If I must sin, and unwillingly, and against Knowledge Conform that I may Preach, I will chuse rather never to Preach, than to Conform and so to Preach. These sober men, are unsober men, wise beyond sobriety of Scripture, and drunken with the intoxicating Wine of the Whore of *Rome's* Cup, that thus stagger and reel up and down from one thing to another, even to whatsoever is uppermost in their dayes.

Whether the men that thus do, be pious, I shall not determine; onely this I may safely conclude; Such mens practices, which we have hinted, are not pious practices, but impious and ungodly, as not being warranted and founded upon the *Word of God*.

Lastly; 'Twere well if this Zeal of theirs for Preaching be not but a blind Zeal, and a bad Zeal, a Zeal rather to preach out themselves, and preach
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in themselves, than to preach out Christ to or into the People. But because I hope this Leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees, neither hath, nor shall leaven many of you, that are wise, even Spiritually-wise Preachers, I shall add no more to this but that word of Peter, *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee*, Acts 8. 22. O Conforming Ministers, if possible, repent of this your wicked conformity; and you, my dearly Beloved, who have yet escaped the corruption that is in the World through lust; O, take you heed lest you also be led away with the *dissemblations* of such.

But once more, If you are Christ's Ministers, and derive Office and Administration from him, then let me intreat you to provide for the Cross, and be neither afraid nor ashamed of it; for if they of the World called the Master of the House *Beelzebub*, how much more shall they call them of his Household? *Mat. 10. 25*. Think not much, in such a day as this is, to be evil spoken of, traduced and slandered, knowing that these afflictions are already accomplished in your Brethren, and the best of Christ's Ministers have met with no better usage from the men of the Throne of Iniquity, as Paul witnesseth, saying, *I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the World, and to Angels, and to Men: We are Fools for Christ's sake; we are weak, we are despised: Even unto this very hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling places, and labour, working with our hands:*
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Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat: We are made as the filth of the World, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day, 1 Cor. 4. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. O start not from your Ministry, or Ministrations of the holy things of Christ, because of such things as these; knowing, that in and from the World you must have persecution, if you be the Ministers of the Lord Jesus, John 16. 33. But say with Paul, None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto my self, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God, Acts 20. 24.

And, Lastly; Let me offer this to your consideration that are the Ministers of Christ; Be professed and resolved Enemies to the Ministers and Ministrations of Antichrist; take part with Christ, and follow him upon white Horses, clothed in fine linnen, white and clean, Rev. 19. 14. Say not a confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy, Isa. 8. 12. But remember that charge, Put you selves in array against Babylon round about; all ye that bend the Bow, shoot at her, spare no Arrows, for she hath sinned against the Lord, Jer. 50. 14. Ye Angels of Christ, Pour out the Vials of the Wrath of God upon the Earth; even upon this Babylonish Earth; Pour out your Vials, filled not with yours, but the Lord's wrath, Rev. 16. 1. 'Tis just work to destroy Babylon, For she hath sinned, and hath corrupted the Kings and the Inhabitants of the Earth, and hath made
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even all Nations drunk with the Wine of the Cup of her Fornications, Rev. 18. 3. Strip her, and make her naked as in the day she was born; for in her will be found the blood of the Prophets, and of Saints, and of all that were slain upon the Earth, Rev. 18. 24. Discover, by a light of Scriptura, her Adulteries, and lay open the filthiness of her Skirts, the beastliness of her Power, the earthliness of her Church and Members, Chap. 13. 12, 13, 14, 16. Shew and discover the nature and vileness of her Locusts, or Clergy-Men, Chap. 9. Discover their even killing Wormwood, or bitterness of her Waters or Doctrine, Chap. 8. 10, 11. Shew that she is the great Whore, great Cheat, and greatest Enemy that ever the Lord Jesus or his People had or shall have; even the same power of unrighteousness which put our Lord, them, and his Saints now to death. Bid defiance to her, and to all her Power, and all her Romish Trinkets; and cry aloud to all the people of God, to have neither more nor less to do with her; but speedily to obey that voice, Come out of her my people, partake not of her sins, lest that ye partake also of her plagues, Chap. 18. 4. Never think of her Repentance, for Repentance is, and shall be hidden from her eyes: She is none of those Whores that know how to be ashamed, or repent, as Chap. 9. 21, 22. She is the great Traytor against the Crown and Dignity of our Sovereign Lord King Jesus; no such Treason hath been hatched or plotted against the Lord Jesus throughout all the World, as in and by the Roman Church and Synagogue. Therefore plead you Worthies of the Lord with her, and against her, and pray without

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without ceasing. Down with her, down with her, down with her, as a Mill-stone into the bottom of the Sea, and let her never rise any more, and set Faith and Patience to work in this case; for is it not written, *And they overcame him by the Blood of the Lamb, and the word of their Testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death; and he that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the Sword, must be killed with the Sword.* Here is the Faith and Patience of the Saints, Rev. 12. 11. and Chap. 13. 10.

O therefore, to conclude, Let all the Gospel-Ministers of the Lord Jesus this day in the World be *Antipasses*, men for Christ, but against Antichrist, and whatsoever is truly of Antichrist both Root and Branch.

So much for the first part of this *Exhortation*, which was to the Ministers of Jesus Christ.

Let me now close with a few closing words to the Churches and Servants of Christ.

If Christ's Ministers spring from him, and both they and their Ministrations depend upon him, and are given of him for the good of you his People, then let me exhort you, who are the Churches and Servants of Christ, to two or three things, and so I shall conclude this Doctrine, and the Text, because I would not be too prolix.

First; Be you Christ's Porters, and the Instruments of making Christ's Servants his Ministers. Be very careful and circumspect to whom you

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you open the Door, or a Door of Entrance or Admittance in any Office of Ministry under the Lord Jesus. Be sure you consult diligently your Charter, the New-Testament Institution concerning Ministers; and when you are to chuse any, be sure you ask Wisdom of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not, *James* 1. 5.

Secondly; Set your thoughts and choice onely upon such men as are of honest report, and full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom, *Acts* 6.

Thirdly; Chuse men competently, and sufficiently endued with such Gifts, as may truly enable and furnish them unto Ministry, yea, unto that particular sort of Ministry whereunto you ordain and appoint them; whether it be to the Office of Teacher, Pastor, Elder, or Deacon; do not chuse idle Shepherds into the place of Christ's Shepherds, such as may wear the Name of Christ's Ministers, but want the Gifts of Christ's Ministers; such will exercise the Instruments of foolish Shepherds among you, rather than of Wise Ministers or Preachers, and be like neither Goads or Nails to you. Yea further, be very circumspect that you mistake not the Gifts of your Ministers, and appoint them to that Ministry in particular, which though they have Gifts for Ministry, yet may not have the proper Gift of that Ministry you chuse them for; for every one hath his proper Gift of God, that fits and disposes Persons for some one or other particular work, not for every, or all the works to be performed in his Church. It were to make your Ministers lying Signs, and like tinkling Brasses, and a

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sounding Cimbāl, to appoint them to one Ministry, when their Grace and Gift propenses and disposes them to another. Therefore as you would honour Christ, or have him honoured by his and your Ministers, be careful and wary in this particular Concern.

Fourthly; Watch over your Ministers that watch over you in the Lord, that they make full proof of their Ministry, and fulfil it in the Lord; lest your watchfulness over them, make them presume to be watchless over themselves, their Ministry, and you also, and so you partake of other mens sins, *1 Tim. 5. 22.*

Fifthly; You that want such, and may enjoy them, neglect not so great a Mercy, neither hinder Christ of so great a Glory, as the Glory of his own Ministry in his own Church, through your want of Zeal and forwardness to promote his and your own concern; but I shall hope I need not enlarge here.

Sixthly; If Christ's Ministers flow from him, and depend upon him, then when you enjoy them, bless and magnifie him for them, who hath not left you Orphans, or as Sheep without a Shepherd. Wise Gospel-Ministers such as we have all along been discoursing of, are very great blessings to a People that enjoy them. Wherefore, when God loves a People, he promiseth them that *he will set Watchmen upon their Walls, which shall never hold their peace day nor night; and also that their Teachers shall no more be removed into Corners, Isa. 62. 6. & 30. 20.*
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Therefore you that enjoy wise, faithful, able, painful Gospel-Ministers, bless God, through Jesus Christ, for this singular Gift of Grace, &c.

But again, Are Ministers of the Gospel such as have been described Christ's Gift and Ordinance, both they and their Ministrations? then let none intrude or impose upon you, the Churches of Christ, a Ministry, or Ministrations, which are none of Christs, nor to be found contained in Scripture; but being free, be not the Servants of Men, but remember *Paul's* Counsel; *Beware lest any man spoil you through Philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and after the rudiments of the World, and not after Christ. Let no man at his pleasure bear rule over you by humbleness of mind, and worshipping of Angels, intruding into these things, which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, Col. 2. 8, 18.*

Further, let me, in the fear of the God, Exhort you, that injoy Christ's Ministry and their Ministrations; *Remember to obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves; for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you, Heb. 13. 17.* Their Work is hard enough from the men of this World. O, let it be good from you for whom they endure all things, or at least very many things, *2 Tim. 2. 10.* They do not only do much for you, but also endure much for you. O! therefore, let them not indure any thing from you, but rather, according to *Paul's* advice, *Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially such as labour in the Word and Doctrine, 1 Tim. 5.*

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17. remembring what is said concerning them; *without the least shadow of pride or vanity. How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad-tydings of peace, Rom. 10. 15.* Now if you would eminently honour and rejoyce your Ministers, pray then labour greatly to improve and profit by their Administrations; for such as are Christ's faithful Ministers, seek not yours but you, 2 Cor. 13. 14. and have no greater joy, than to hear that their Children walk in or according to truth, 3 John 4. This makes great rejoycing and thanksgiving by Christ's Ministers, when they either hear or see, that those they labour among do prosper, and their graces grow, as we have it, Ephes. 1. 15, 16. *Wherefore I also, when I heard of your Faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the Saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;* whereas to find the Saints and Churches of Christ, in a poor, low, beggarly state of Soul, not improving nor profiting under means of Grace, this will cause Christ and his Ministers to weep and complain, and even sit down and bemoan themselves in the sense of it, according to that prophesie, Isa. 33. 7. *Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without; the Ambassadors of Peace shall weep bitterly,* fulfilled by this Prophet the Type of Christ. *Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain,* Chap. 49. 4. And how fully was this Prophecie made good by Christ, who, *when he was come near, he beheld the City and wept over it,* Luke 19. 41. Wherefore Sirs, if you have any love to Christ, or compassion towards your Ministers, improve them, and strive to prosper

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ſper under their Miniſtration, ſo will you prevent their grief, and give them a good reward for their labour.

But again, to haſten to a concluſion, and cloſing up of the Uſe of Exhortation ; pray you, if your Miniſters be Chriſt's Miniſters, and Chriſt's Miniſters flow from him, depend upon him, and miniſter for him ; pray you joyn with, and aſſiſt them in what-ever they for Chriſt have need of you ; as *Paul* directed the Church of the *Romans*, *To do for Phebe, that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh Saints, and that ye aſſiſt her in whatſoever buſineſſ ſhe hath need of you*, *Rom. 16. 2.* So ſay I, pray aſſiſt your Miniſters with your watchfulneſs, with your obſervation of thoſe they labour among and for. Help them with your *Informations*, concerning what you obſerve wanting either in them or others. Help them with your Zeal and readineſs, to joyn iſſue with them in any buſineſſ of Chriſt, like thoſe Holy Ones we read of, *Exod. 36. 1.* *Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wiſe-hearted man, in whom the Lord put wiſdom and underſtanding, to know how to work all manner of work, for the ſervice of the Sanctuary, according to all that the Lord commanded.* The like frame of Spirit we read of in thoſe mentioned, *Ezra 1. 5, 6.* with *Nehem. 2. 18.* where the People of the Lord are found thus doing ; *And they ſaid, Let us riſe up and build : So they ſtrengthened their hands for this good Work.*

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But lastly; Pray you, let me Exhort you to assist Ministers with your Prayers for their good, and the prosperity of Christ's work in their hand; remembering, *That whilst Moses's hands were upheld by Aaron and Hur, Israel prevailed, Exod. 17. 11, 12.* Even so my Brethren, your incessant Prayers in your Ministers behalf, will utterly overthrow *Amalek*, and help *Joshua* and *Israel* to prevail.

And thus I have done with this *Exhortation*, and with what I shall offer to your consideration upon this Scripture; wherein I have, with what cleanness and brevity conveniently I could, set before you what Preaching is, and whose Ordinance it is; who is a truly wise Preacher, and what his Work is; and the Blessing and Duty of all that enjoy such Preachers.

Now consider and examine what hath been said, and the Lord give you wisdom in all things. *Amen, Amen.*

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